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Between Sorrow and Pride: The Morenci Nine, the Vietnam War, and Memory in Small-Town America[1]

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In July 1966 nine friends left the small copper-mining camp of Morenci, Arizona, for Marine boot camp. Ultimately, within two and a half years, all served in Vietnam, with only three returning alive. Over time, the Morenci Nine, as the group became known, emerged as an important story in the history of the Vietnam War and its impact on people in the Southwest. How people remembered the fallen sons of the copper miners, raised in a segregated company town, became important. The process followed the national pattern of individuals sustaining the memories until the nation finally started to deal with the trauma of the losses after the unveiling of the Vietnam Memorial. The efforts continue today as new forms of memorialization develop for the Morenci Nine even forty years later.

Key words: *Morenci, Marine Corps, Vietnam War, U.S. Southwest, small towns, veterans, memorialization*

On July 4, 1966, a brilliant, scorching sun beat down on a large crowd gathered in the shadows of red rock mountains at the bus stop at Foster Sims's Texaco station in the small mining camp of Morenci, Arizona. Nine young men, the oldest twenty and the youngest seventeen, waited with their friends and families to board a bus bound for San Diego and Marine boot camp. Significant differences existed. The red-haired, fair-skinned Stan King stood 6'5 and weighed 230 pounds, towering above Leroy Cisneros who was 5'5

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1. This article reflects the last chapter in my new book: Kyle Longley, *The Morenci Marines: Small Town America in the Shadow of the Vietnam War* [working title] (Lawrence, Kans., forthcoming 2013).

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and 140 pounds, with dark hair, eyes, and complexion. Other contrasts existed among the group that included Clive Garcia, Jr., Joe Sorrelman, Van Whitmer, Bobby Dale Draper, Larry West, Mike Cranford, and Robert Moncayo.[2]

Despite physical differences, they shared many things in common, for their fathers toiled either in the deep open-pit copper mine or under the twin smokestacks of the always fuming smelter. Their parents shopped at the Phelps Dodge Company store, and each lived in segregated housing, for Phelps Dodge put Mexican Americans in several parts of the town, while Joe, the quiet Navajo Indian whose parents spoke no English, headed each evening to Tent City in the shadows of the smokestacks.[3] All in all, the group was a cross-section of the camp, representing the children of working-class miners who had few options, other than going into the mine or seeking their adventure elsewhere in organizations such as the U.S. Marine Corps.[4]

After some tearful goodbyes, the young men headed to San Diego. There they endured eight weeks of hell in boot camp, withstanding the ferocious verbal assaults of the intimidating Sgt.

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2. The journey had actually started several months before in March 1966 when Marine Sgt. Earl Peterson, dressed in his Marine blues, jumped in his black Cadillac and traveled more than 100 miles from another mining town, Globe. That day several of the young men were sitting in Helen Arnold's English class when she announced a pop quiz. None had prepared, and each breathed a sigh of relief when the principal suddenly arrived and announced that anyone meeting with the Marine recruiter could skip the quiz. Immediately, volunteers ran toward the door, almost trampling each other in an inadvertent rush toward their future. Once they were in place, Peterson mesmerized the young men with tales of opportunity and adventure and how they would be joining the toughest military branch in the world, building on perceptions already strongly ingrained by John Wayne movies and the experiences of their male relatives in World War II and Korea. Soon others arrived with the initial group at a local restaurant, the Copper Kettle, where Peterson continued to regale them with tall tales of Marine lore. By the end of the day, Peterson had nine recruits, quite a haul for any armed services recruiter. Interview with Mike Cranford by author, May 23, 2003, York, Ariz.; interview with Joe Sorrelman by author, July 20, 2003, Glendale, Ariz.

3. Sorrelman interview, July 20, 2003.

4. For more on Morenci and the surrounding area, see Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999); Sandra Day O'Connor and H. Alan Day, *Lazy B* (New York, 2005); Ted Cogut and Bill Conger, *History of Arizona's Clifton-Morenci Mining District—A Personal Approach: Volume 1: The Underground Days* (Thatcher, Ariz., 1999); Carlos A. Schwantes, *Vision and Enterprise: Exploring the History of Phelps Dodge Corporation* (Tucson, Ariz., 2000); James R. Kluger, *The Clifton-Morenci Strike: Labor Difficulty in Arizona, 1915–1916* (Tucson, Ariz., 1970); Jonathan D. Rosenblum, *Copper Crucible: How the Arizona Miners' Strike of 1983 Recast Labor-Management Relations in America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998); Elena Díaz Björkquist, *Suffer Smoke* (Houston, Tex., 1996).

Figure 1. Boot camp, Platoon 1055 U.S. Marine Corps, San Diego, 1966, which included the members of the Morenci Nine; gift of the Garcia family.

R. A. Bowser, who led Platoon 1055. They supported each other during the long runs in the hot summer days, quietly encouraging those who struggled and picking up the packs of those who fell behind. When other challenges arose, they responded as a group. One day Van cut through the line of another platoon at the mess hall, provoking the other Marines. Instinctively, the Morenci boys sprang to his defense and pummeled Van's assailants. Finally, in early September 1966, they proudly stood together for photos in their nicely pressed uniforms to celebrate surviving the grueling process.[5]

By the time that they graduated, the Morenci Nine (as the group became known) faced the inevitability of heading to the far-off exotic land of South Vietnam. In December 1966 the first four marched up the gangplank of the *U.S.S. General Gaffey* bound for Southeast Asia.[6] Over the next two and half years, the rest followed.

5. Interview with Leroy Cisneros by author, June 5, 2007, Yuma, Ariz.; Mike Cranford interview, May 23, 2003; Sorrelman interview, July 20, 2003.

6. Cisneros interview, June 5, 2007.

Ultimately, what distinguished the boys from Morenci from many others was the concentration of deaths. Starting in August 1967, with the death of Bobby Dale in an enemy ambush, members fell in combat at an alarming rate. Stan followed in November 1967, then three more in 1968—Van in April, Larry in May, and Robert in June.[7] The anticipated parties planned for their returns turned instead into funerals as the community grieved over its heavy losses.

While there was a short respite from deaths, the final one—Clive's—brought national attention to the plight of the Morenci Nine. The last to go to Vietnam, Clive Garcia died in November 1969 while trying to defuse an enemy booby trap in an area ironically designated the "Arizona Territory." As the small community gathered to bury another of its young men, journalists representing numerous media outlets, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Time*, and ABC News, descended on Morenci. They found the mining camp reeling, but, as one person noted, "this is too tough a community to be broken. Bent, perhaps, even stretched out of shape. But not broken."[8] Despite the sadness, observers highlighted the unflinching patriotism of the people of Morenci.[9]

After the burial of Clive, attention shifted elsewhere, to others stories about the devastating nature of the Vietnam War. A Hollywood producer showed up wanting to make a movie, but the families resisted and retreated into their own sorrow and anguish.[10] Over time, Morenci adopted the nation's war weariness, and Vietnam veterans suffered the consequences. Even veterans groups like the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in Greenlee County grappled with how to treat Vietnam veterans, a problem exacerbated by the generation gap between the World War II and Vietnam veterans.[11] This occurred frequently across the country.

In the aftermath of the war, most Americans tried to forget the war and its effects. For nearly a decade, veterans and their families and friends privately sustained the memories, particularly of those who died in Vietnam. It was a process focused on sorrow, anger, and

7. "Semper Fidelis: The Marines of Morenci," *Time*, Jan. 5, 1970, pp. 43–44.

8. Edwin McDowell, "Close-Knit Community of Morenci Sags Under Weight of Vietnam Casualties," *Arizona Republic* (clipping, no date provided), Morenci Public Library, Morenci, Ariz.

9. *Arizona Republic*, Dec. 11, 1969.

10. Interview with Julia Garcia by author, April 23, 2004, Safford, Ariz.

11. Interview with Steve Guzzo by author, May 23, 2003, Clifton, Ariz.

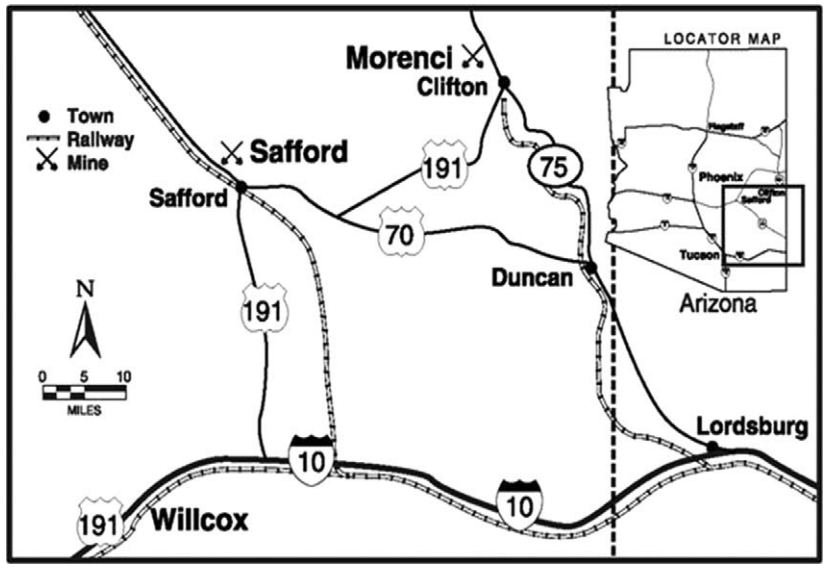

Figure 2. Map of the Morenci area in Arizona.

feelings of betrayal. In the early 1980s, however, changes occurred as the Vietnam Memorial on the National Mall raised the visibility of Vietnam veterans in the public awareness. Pride in having fulfilled their duty became more common as Vietnam veterans increasingly highlighted a more noble meaning in their service, although sadness remained a cornerstone of the process.

The pattern of the remembrance of the Morenci Nine in many ways paralleled that of the nation and provides insights into the process. The sacrifice of the group, of both the living and the dead, has created a larger-than-life story that has become a cornerstone of the community's consciousness, as well as, to a degree, that of the region and even the country regarding the Vietnam War. Understanding how this evolved and has been sustained is important for comprehending local and national acts of remembrance relating to the Vietnam War.

Remembering the Vietnam veterans, including the Morenci Nine, occurred in a very different context than that of their fathers and uncles who fought in World War II. When the World War II veterans returned home, they came as a large collective group and flooded their hometowns. Across the country, they received parades, and people erected monuments to honor them. The federal

government heaped benefits on them, including the immensely popular GI Bill. A national narrative advanced, highlighting the triumph of the Americans over the fascists while often glossing over the sadness of loss.[12]

In contrast, Vietnam veterans received few parades or monuments and generally felt isolated within society. This paralleled the country's mood, as the United States began large-scale withdrawals from Vietnam in 1970, culminating in the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Years of division and protests created an America wanting to close the book on this sad chapter in its history. Consequently, Vietnam veterans became invisible outside of the negative stereotypes often perpetuated in movies and on television.[13] As one distinguished historian has noted, the country developed a "self-conscious, collective amnesia" regarding the war and those who fought it.[14]

The memorialization of the Vietnam veteran during the first decade after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Vietnam in 1973 rested almost exclusively in the private rather than the public realm. Few Americans, including those in Greenlee County, publicly challenged the standard negative portrayals of the war and those who fought. Instead, the private efforts of the soldiers and their families and friends became a cornerstone of remembrance. Most refused to let the memories wane, but, instead of the triumphalism of the World War II generation, they focused on the idea of the sacrifice and sorrow, all the while searching for some meaning in the losses associated with the Vietnam experience.

Regarding the Morenci Nine, particularly those who perished, family members and friends (including the three survivors) sustained and protected the memories. It did not happen in a vacuum. Instinctively, many had become disillusioned with the news coverage of *Time* and ABC News after Clive's death. They believed the media politicized the deaths with an antiwar slant. For years, parents and family members worried about how the Morenci Nine and

12. John Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore, Md., 2010), 60–129.

13. Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (Amherst, Mass., 2009), 65–67; Andrew J. Huebner, *The Warrior Image: Soldiers in American Culture from the Second World War to the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2007), 207–272.

14. George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975* (New York, 2002), 347.

their sacrifices would be presented by those from outside the community.[15]

Being extremely protective of the memories continued for many years, even after the first attempt at public remembrance with the movie producer failed in 1970. When a reporter and Safford native, Don Hoffman, sought to write the story in the 1980s, the families proved leery.[16] Several resisted, and the Garcia family even considered hiring legal counsel to stop the process. Hoffman made some progress but eventually dropped the project due to the lack of cooperation.[17]

As the most vigilant guardians of memory regarding the dead among the Morenci Nine, family members and close friends, including the survivors, possessed an intimate knowledge of the habits and histories of their sons, brothers, friends, and classmates. There were different manifestations of retaining memories, but three stand out. First, families and friends preserved memorabilia, particularly of those who died. Second, people conducted individual acts of remembrance. And finally, they talked about the group and in particular the dead, keeping alive their memories. Each was an important step in sustaining the memories during a period when many Americans sought to forget the Vietnam War.

In many cases, family members preserved physical reminders of their loved ones. Stan's family followed the instructions he issued before he shipped out to Vietnam and kept his toiletries and clothes around where he left them.[18] Others in the West and Draper families collected the belongings of the fallen, including letters, medals, and photos, keeping them in safe places.[19] Kathy Garcia Windsor, Clive's sister, was an avid scrapbooker who created an elaborate visual memorial to her brother. She showed it to her children and grandchildren as well as others, helping to tell the story of his sacrifice for his country.[20] Over and over, parents and siblings refused to part

15. Julia Garcia interview, April 23, 2004.

16. Donald Hoffman produced a substantial book proposal from his initial research, but, when he had trouble finding a publisher and encountered resistance from several families, he shelved the project. Donald W. Hoffman, "A Few Good Men: The True Story of the Morenci Marines," book proposal, 1989, copy in author's possession.

17. Julia Garcia interview, April 23, 2004.

18. Interview with Alma (Penny) King by author, April 24, 2004, Safford, Ariz.

19. Numerous examples of such materials have been viewed and reproduced by the author, who has possession of many of the letters and photos.

20. Email from Kathy Garcia Windsor to the author, June 24, 2012.

with the physical signs of their son or brother, determined to hold onto the memories despite the often accompanying pain.

The same was true of friends, including the three survivors. Leroy kept a picture of himself and Bobby Dale from when they partied at Camp Reasoner, right before Bobby Dale died in combat. That picture and others of himself from Vietnam hung in prominent places in his family home in Yuma, even many years later.[21] In other cases, friends such as Carol Figueroa (née Navarette) put away the letters that Robert Moncayo sent from Hawai'i and Vietnam, keeping them for more than thirty years.[22] Others followed suit, like Oscar Urrea, who inherited Robert's pictures and medals, including his formal one from boot camp as well as the Purple Heart that he put in a shadow box.[23] Others did similar things with a variety of mementos from the Morenci Nine.

Beyond keeping physical reminders of the Morenci Nine, actions also sustained the memories of the dead. An early example was Kenneth Draper's school newspaper article, "'Why, Oh Why?' First There Were Nine, Now Three . . . ." Published only a few days after Clive's funeral in December 1969, the article underscored that "the incredible fate of the six young men, representing the cream of Morenci's youth, has stunned the school and the community." Kenneth Draper acknowledged that "the young men of Morenci know how to die" but that "they pray that this dreadful war with all of its suffering will end soon."[24]

In the Garcia family, the actions extended over many years. In the early stages, Martin Garcia relentlessly attempted to join the Marine Corps and follow in his brother's footsteps, demonstrating his commitment to carrying on Clive's legacy. There were also long-term acts, such as Danny Garcia's caring for his brother's grave as well as that of Robert in Bunker Hill Cemetery around each Memorial Day or on Clive's birthday, September 17.[25] These small, albeit

21. The author observed the photos during a visit to the Cisneros home in January 2011.

22. Copies of the letters provided to the author by Carol Figueroa.

23. Interview with Oscar Urrea by author, Jan. 30, 2004, Mesa, Ariz.

24. Kenneth Draper, "'Why. Oh Why?' First There Were Nine, Now Three . . . ," *The Wildcat* (Morenci High School), Dec. 23, 1969, pp. 1, 3. Kenneth Draper was Bobby Dale Draper's brother.

25. Email from Daniel Garcia to author, June 22, 2012.

powerful, symbolic acts helped sustain the memory of the fallen on the personal level.

Friends also performed small acts of remembrance. A high school classmate and Army veteran, Larry Kenan, visited the gravesites of Stan and Bobby Dale at the Ward's Canyon Cemetery, taking time to clean them of weeds and any debris. Then, he would sit and talk to them about the town and the football season.[26] In another case, members of the Class of 1964 gave a plaque to Stan's parents; it read, "In Memoriam Lance Cpl. Bradford Stanley King. Killed in Action November 6, 1967 in Vietnam. Class of 1964." The family placed the plaque in the high school trophy case only a few years after his death, and it remained there for other students to view.[27]

Maintaining the memories on a personal level often went beyond archiving physical belongings or commemorative actions and encompassed common psychological acts of remembrance. While a normal coping mechanism might have been to suppress the painful losses, most family members fought such impulses. Another family that lost a son in Vietnam highlighted how many in Morenci felt:

> When the evening shades are falling
> And we are sitting all alone
> In our hearts there comes a longing
> If he only could come home.[28]

Regardless, as distinguished author Gabriel García Márquez observes, "the memory of the heart eliminates the bad and magnifies the good; thanks to this artifice, we are able to bear the past."[29]

The memories of good times that circulated within families regarding those who were violently ripped from their midst proved extremely important. The Memorial Day statement of a family whose son died in combat encapsulated the feelings of many who lost sons in combat: "Nothing can ever take away the love a heart holds dear. Remembrances keep him near."[30] Being a close-knit community

26. Interview with Larry Kenan by author, Feb. 11, 2004, Mesa, Ariz.

27. *Copper Era*, Nov. 6, 1968.

28. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J., 1992), 91.

29. Quote found at Spanish Quotes Presents, http://www.spanish-learning-corner.com/spanish-quotes-marquez.html.

30. As cited in Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 39.

aided the process, and many shared the sentiment of one high school friend, Larry Aker, who commented about his lost comrades, "They're not gone as long as you say their names."[31]

Remembrances manifested in multiple ways. They could be as random as a thought or maybe a conversation during a meal when people talked about Stan getting in a fight with some Clifton boys or when family members relived the big game where Bobby Dale returned a fumble for a touchdown, only to have the score negated.[32] Relatives retold tales about Clive and his brothers trying to trap animals along the river and their disappointment at finding a skunk instead of the legendary tiger they sought.[33] In most cases, the memories of the dead remained firmly implanted in the recollections of the living, and many were passed on to young people who might not have known their uncles or cousins.

Others, many former mentors, also played a role. William Senne, a local high school history teacher, often told his students about the Morenci Nine. Over the years he joined other teachers who had their students research the topic. One of these students, Oscar Baca, wrote a prize-winning paper on the Morenci Nine for the Arizona Historical Convention in 2004.[34] Their efforts continued for many years as the story became a cornerstone of the historical consciousness of the community and also a reminder to subsequent generations of their duty to serve, despite the horrific costs inflicted on the families and community by such choices.

Legends of those who passed grew over time, and, while sadness usually followed, the act of talking about them helped in the long healing process for those left behind. Forty years after his brother died, Martin Garcia emphasized, "a month does not go by without my other brother and me speaking of and remembering him." The context was important as he watched people around him deal with new losses. "I feel for all those younger siblings who have lost their older idols to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in these modern times.

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31. As cited in Oscar Baca, "The Morenci Nine: An Encounter with the Vietnam War," paper prepared for National History Day by a Morenci High School student. See http://www.nhdarizona.org/SRHP016-PDF1.pdf; accessed June 20, 2009.

32. Alma (Penny) King interview, April 24, 2004; interview with Robert Clinton Draper (Bobby Dale Draper's father) by author, April 22, 2004, York, Ariz.

33. Nikki Windsor (niece of Clive Garcia) posted on the Vietnam Virtual Wall, May 22, 2006, at http://www.virtualwall.org/dg/GarciaCx01a.htm; accessed July 7, 2012.

34. Interview with William Senne by author, Nov. 9, 2003, Morenci, Ariz.

Even after the return home, let us never forget the impact each and every one who served in the military made in our lives."[35]

In the end, the survivors also became an important source of remembrance, especially as witnesses to the story.[36] "I don't want them to be forgotten because they sacrificed their lives," Leroy told one reporter. "Those guys have been dead for 30 years but not in mind," he added; "I want my kids to at least know that Bobby Draper, their dad's best friend, died in Vietnam for a good reason."[37] The latter part of the statement carries great significance. Survivors and family members wanted people to know that those who died had not done so in vain and to challenge those they told never to forget to honor those who had made the ultimate sacrifice, even if in an unpopular war.[38] For many years, this remained a central focus in sustaining the memory of the Nine.

The memories carried by family and friends extended beyond Morenci. Like so many rural areas across the United States over the past forty years, Greenlee County lost large numbers of people, especially after the devastating 1983 strike.[39] Some headed to other mining towns, while many retired in Safford and Graham County. Others sought more stable employment in larger towns such as Phoenix and Tucson that boomed in the 1980s and 1990s. They also spread throughout the region into California, Oregon, Utah, Idaho, and Montana, settling in densely populated cities including Los Angeles and San Diego.

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35. Comments by Martin Garcia responding to Whitney Phillips, in "'Morenci Nine' Brought Home," Nov. 11, 2011, *Arizona Daily Star*. See http://dynamic.azstarnet.com/comments/viewcommentsnew.php?id=/news/local/morenci-nine-brought-war-home/article_cc5888ec-cc42-50b9-808b-12c4b27d6b07.html&h='Morenci%20Nine'%20brought%20war%20home; accessed Nov. 22, 2011.

36. Analysts stress the importance of the presence of the survivors and that their memories carry special weight for having been among those who endured the horrible trauma. For more, see Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembrance* (Berkeley, 1997), 72–73.

37. *Arizona Republic*, April 30, 2000.

38. Leroy Cisneros was not blind in his faith about the war or the cause. In fact, he actively questioned the U.S. involvement in Iraq after 2003. He stressed that "we shouldn't be there in the first place" and that President George W. Bush "lied about it." He hated that there were "no front lines" and that the Iraqis "don't help themselves." The bitterness clearly intensified as the war escalated and more people died, including some stationed at the Marine base in Yuma. Leroy Cisneros interview, June 5, 2007.

39. For more on the devastating strike, see Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mining Strike in 1983* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996), and Rosenblum, *Copper Crucible*.

As they left, they carried memories of their community with its rich history of labor strife and seemingly larger-than-life tales. Their remembrance of the Morenci Nine was transferred to friends, coworkers, and children in their new homes. People took pride in where they came from as they moved into new lives in different areas. They told the stories of their community, allowing the Morenci Nine narrative to seep into the regional consciousness.

While often assisting in the healing process, sustaining the memories also came with a cost. For example, as the twentieth anniversary of Clive's death neared, Julia Garcia, his mother, wrote a letter to Martin expressing that "because I am human & weak I most certainly remember & at times still grieve," adding, however, "my grief is not as painful for the dead as it is for the living." "I hurt so much to see what the conflict of Viet Nam has done to you," she lamented; "So many lives have been marred. I am sorry yours has to be one of them. Sorry because it's so unfair that someone like you has to suffer so much." She continued, "I have been able to cope with hurts, . . . & with God's grace accept death because I have the hope which the resurrected Christ has given to us."[40] The pain of the loss was substantial, even years later, and the living struggled mightily. War most closely affected those who fought it, but its effects extended well beyond.

The survivors carried the largest burden of dealing with the losses. Many people, including Mike, Joe, and Leroy, echoed the sentiments of another Vietnam veteran who thought about the "Guilt for surviving. Guilt for not saving someone. Guilt for being saved."[41] Another Marine veteran stressed that, in dealing with the remorse about people who died when you did not, "those demons diminish with time but never go away."[42]

The burden seemed to weigh most heavily on Mike. He became increasingly vocal about the war and its effects. In 1993 he complained, "Vietnam was a lower middle class war. If you had money,

40. Julia Garcia to Martin Garcia, Oct. 29, 1989, among the letters and papers of Clive Garcia, Jr., in the possession of the Garcia family.

41 Jack Estes, "A Vietnam Survivor's Guilt," *San Diego Union Tribune*, Aug. 22, 2010. More on the topic can be found in Chuck [Charles A.] Dean, *Nam Vet: Making Peace with Your Past* (n.p., 2012), and James McGarrity, *Checkpoint One-Four: A Vietnam Veteran's Chronicle of Survivor Guilt, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Mending the Invisible Wound* (self-published, 2009).

42. Email from Col. Tim Geraghty to author, June 24, 2012.

you went to college. I didn't go because I wanted to. I went because I was too stupid to know better." He went on, adding, "back then I could have told you the make and model of every car going down the road and what was under the hood and the stats of all the cheerleaders, but I didn't even know what a Vietnam was . . . .The farthest any of us had ever been was Lordsburg and maybe Phoenix. And we're going off to fight for democracy? . . . We were small town kids who didn't know any better."[43]

Over time, Mike became increasingly distant and disconnected, nursing an undiagnosed case of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It manifested itself in various ways. Nearly thirty years after the death of his friends, he traveled to a tattoo parlor and had a tattoo of Morenci 9 placed on his arms. He planned to put six crosses up his arm, from his wrist to his shoulder. He wanted each to include the name of one of his six friends who died in Vietnam. On his body, he would memorialize his friends.[44] Around Greenlee County, Mike remained a daily reminder of the losses from decades before.

While Joe and Leroy battled nightmares and flashbacks relating to their service and the loss of their friends in Vietnam, Mike battled the darkest demons. Finally, he sought medical assistance in 2004 at the Veterans Administration (VA) hospital in Tucson. The doctors immediately diagnosed him with a severe case of PTSD and declared him 70 percent PTSD and 30 percent unemployable.[45] He took the disability payments, immediately quit Phelps Dodge, and began doing a series of odd jobs around his home in York. Unfortunately, only a couple of years later, he died from a massive coronary. The memories of Vietnam had contributed mightily to his early demise.[46]

The personal memories of the Morenci Nine had to suffice since few public commemorations occurred for many years. While more than 58,000 families dealt with the individual losses of sons in Vietnam, in Morenci, the Nine held a central place. The clustering of the deaths made the story more exceptional. Several communities in Arizona and the country lost similar numbers, some in even smaller towns, but the fact that the young men joined together from

43. *Mesa Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1993.
44. Interview with Joyce Cranford by author, Nov. 11 2007, Clifton, Ariz.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*

a mining camp created a nearly unique narrative. Of course, the families and friends held onto the memories, but the fact that the deaths touched so many members of the community had long-term consequences for remembering the Vietnam War in Greenlee County when memorialization became more fashionable in the mid-1980s.

The private efforts also meant a great deal because they had therapeutic effects. Personal remembrance proved a coping mechanism that assisted the healing process. Sustaining the memories of the fallen allowed people to hold on to the positive and, over time, to suppress some of the negative aspects of the loss, albeit never fully. Ultimately, pride in the commitment of those who served during the divisive conflict increasingly coexisted with the anguish. In time, the meaning became more about sacrifice and honoring those who had died, although the sorrow never dissipated completely.

Finally, retaining remembrances in the private realm allowed people to protect the memories of their sons, brothers, and friends. There was no competition with a grand national narrative, like that from World War II, where triumph usually trumped sorrow. The families and friends fashioned their own account, one about the sorrow but not lacking meaning. That allowed them to prevent the appropriation and misuse of the memory by those with political agendas, such as either the antiwar movement or the hawks who sought to extol the constructed virtue of the crusade in Vietnam to promote their own aggressive foreign policy in the 1980s.

It is easier to examine public commemoration efforts, since they usually create permanent structures to honor the dead, visible markers shared by the collective body. Private manifestations are enduring but constantly in flux, since they lack the relative permanency of monuments or other structures. They are also more difficult to observe. Nonetheless, they forcefully sustained the memory of individuals and became a fundamental cornerstone of remembrance for Morenci and, to a degree, a region and even the nation relating to the Vietnam War.

The Morenci example corresponded closely with the national story of remembrance of the Vietnam soldier during the first decade after the war ended. Memories resided primarily in the private realm and focused on sorrow as well as feelings of neglect and betrayal. After the mid-1980s, however, changes occurred. Sorrow remained

central to the narrative, but, more and more, an effort at healing corresponded with an increased pride. The story of the Morenci Nine, along with many others across the country, played a role in redefining the discourse.

The memorialization of the Vietnam soldiers differed significantly from earlier manifestations after the American Revolution, Civil War, and World War II. In those cases, civic leaders quickly erected memorials to those who fought as well as those who died.[47] However, starting with Korea and especially during the long, tumultuous struggle in Vietnam, Americans sought to forget, not glorify, the conflicts in the public realm.[48] While some memorialization efforts occurred for Vietnam in the 1970s, such as the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel in 1971 just outside of Taos, New Mexico, these paled in comparison to those for World War II.[49] The early efforts, much like the private ones, focused more on sorrow and loss than on creating a grand narrative of triumph comparable to that crafted for their fathers after 1945.

Instead, many Vietnam veterans fought to overcome prejudice and negative stereotypes permeating American society in the 1970s. The most significant struggle involved the efforts by veterans to build a national Vietnam memorial on the Washington Mall in the 1980s. The project was the brainchild of Vietnam veteran Jan Scruggs. After watching the movie *The Deer Hunter*, Scruggs experienced flashbacks, seeing the faces of his fallen comrades. "The names," he lamented,

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47. On memorialization, see Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, 1991); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1997); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002); Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York, 2008); and James Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York, 1988).

48. For more on the topic of Korea, see James Kerin, Jr., "The Korean War in American Memory" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1994); Philip West and Suh Ji-moon, eds., *Remembering the "Forgotten War": The Korean War Through Literature and Art* (Armonk, N.Y., 2001); and Paul M. Edwards, *To Acknowledge a War: The Korean War in American Memory* (Westport, Conn., 2000).

49. The chapel honors the memory of Lt. Victor Westphall III who died in Vietnam in 1968. His family took the insurance money and built the chapel, dedicated in 1971, that his father stressed was to ensure that his son's death would "become a symbol that will arouse all mankind and bring a rejection of the principles which defile, debase, and destroy the youth of the world"; cited in Robert Schulzinger, *A Time for Peace: The Legacy of the Vietnam War* (New York, 2006), 104. For more on the subject, see Victor Westphall, *David's Story: A Casualty of Vietnam* (Springer, N.M., 1981).

"the names. No one remembers their names." He told how he emerged from his traumatic experience wanting to build a memorial that would "have the names of everyone killed."[50]

For more than three years, Scruggs and his comrades raised money to construct the memorial while simultaneously lobbying Congress to allocate a site for it on the National Lawn near the Lincoln Memorial.[51] Ultimately, they succeeded, and twenty-one-year-old Yale University undergraduate Maya Lin designed a wall built into the ground in the shape of an elongated V, its black granite embedded with the names of the service people who had died. To personalize the experience, the polished stone reflected the image of the person viewing the names.

Despite some criticisms that led to the addition of a statue and flagpole, the official unveiling of the memorial occurred on November 12, 1982.[52] Overall, people responded very favorably. For some, it became a place of healing, especially for family members, friends, and comrades-in-arms.[53] One Marine stressed: "I think the Vietnam Memorial has been a great thing for the Vietnam veterans. It's really focused people's attention on Vietnam veterans in a respectful way, . . . I think it's helped us 100 percent."[54]

Historian Kristin Ann Hass summarized the effect of the memorial very well. "The Wall elicits a physical response. It has inspired visitors to represent their own grief, loss, rage, and despair." Over time, people began leaving memorabilia, including letters, medals, and teddy bears. "Contributing their private representations to public space," Hass explained, "they cross the boundary between the private and public, the nation and the citizen, powerfully claiming the memorial as their own."[55] The monument remains one of the most visited sites in Washington and led to a flurry of activity as other

50. Jan C. Scruggs and Joel L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (New York, 1985), 7. Jan Scruggs had outlined plans a couple of years earlier in a publication to create a national memorial, but the story carried a lot of weight because a slew of films on the war followed the *The Deer Hunter* and changed perceptions of the service. Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 81.

51. Schulzinger, *A Time for Peace*, 96.

52. Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 6.

53. Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley, 1998), 20–21.

54. Tom Magedanz interview in *South Dakotans in Vietnam: Excerpts From the South Dakota Vietnam Veterans Oral History Project—Pierre Area* (Pierre, S. Dak., 1986), 72.

55. Hass, *Carried to the Wall*, 21.

veterans from World War II and Korea sought their own after 1982. It also shaped the design of many future memorials, including those built to honor the Vietnam veterans.

In addition, the memorial provided Vietnam veterans with a renewed sense of purpose that allowed them to claim a place of respect in the country. Long-delayed parades followed in cities such as Houston and Chicago. On May 7, 1985, more than 25,000 Vietnam veterans marched in New York City's "Canyon of Heroes" in front of over a million people who showered them with 468 tons of ticker tape.[56] The unveiling of the Wall, combined with other activities, unleashed a barrage of activity by Vietnam veterans and their families to build other memorials at the state and local levels, bringing a new pride in their contributions to their country. This would carry over into many different venues, including Greenlee County.

At the Vietnam Memorial, the Morenci Nine constitute only a small portion of the more than 58,000 names engraved into the black granite. Yet, for people from Greenlee County, they represent a reminder of the sacrifice of their community as their story became interwoven with the narrative of other towns that paid such a heavy price during Vietnam.

When people go to the memorial in Washington, D.C., they usually have to search through a large book located at the ends of the memorial that lists the names of those on the wall. The search carries people to the following parts of the wall, a process made harder by the fact that Clifton is listed as Stan's hometown:

Bobby Dale Draper	Panel 24E, Line 66
Stan King	Panel 29E, Line 32
Van Whitmer	Panel 49E, Line 48
Larry West	Panel 62E, Line 4
Jose [Robert] Moncayo	Panel 56W, Line 26
Clive Garcia	Panel 16W, Line 124

While many from Morenci have never had the opportunity to visit Washington, because of the significant costs associated with traveling there, some witnessed firsthand the power of the monument. They include Clive Garcia's younger sister, Kathy, who made the trek in June 1986. While attending a conference in Baltimore, she joined a colleague on a hot and humid Friday for the short trip to the

56. *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1985.

memorial. After a circuitous excursion along the intricate Washington freeway system, they arrived at the Mall.[57]

The journey was a hard one for Kathy, who had been so close to the brother who called her his "princess." "As we walked along the long reflection pond," Kathy remembered, "I started to shake and I had a hard time catching my breath, then my legs were shaking so bad a couple of times I grabbed my friend's arm." When her coworker asked if she really wanted to continue, Kathy replied affirmatively. By the time that she reached the book of names used to locate the fallen, "I was full blown hyperventilating. All I can say is it's a good thing that the book had a glass cover because I was crying so bad, my tears falling on the glass." As she looked through the index, she thought, "ALL THESE NAMES." She found Clive's name and began rubbing it with her finger, crying very hard as her tears wet the cover and pavement where she stood.[58]

A long walk followed, down to where Clive's name resided toward the middle of the memorial that sank into the ground. As they passed the other panels, "ALL THE NAMES" kept flooding her mind. Then, she stopped in front of the 16W panel and began looking for Clive's name. "Then my eyes locked on his name and my knees buckled a little and the sobbing was uncontrollable. Lots of people all around but I didn't care . . . I squatted down and rubbed my finger over his name." After a while, she made an etching of his name and took tons of pictures. As she strode away, she looked back down the long wall with the flowers and other things left for people, again thinking, "ALL THOSE NAMES."[59]

The architect of the Wall, Maya Lin, emphasized that her design left it "up to each individual to resolve or come to terms with this loss. For death is in the end a personal and private matter and the area containing this within the memorial is a quiet place, meant for personal reflection and private reckoning."[60] She clearly achieved her goal for Kathy, whose emotional journey in 1986 paralleled those of others who have visited the site over the years. More people from Greenlee County followed, including Penny King and Oscar Urrea, the latter traveling in a motorcycle caravan to pay

57. Email from Kathy Garcia Windsor to author, July 4, 2012.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Schulzinger, *A Time for Peace*, 98.

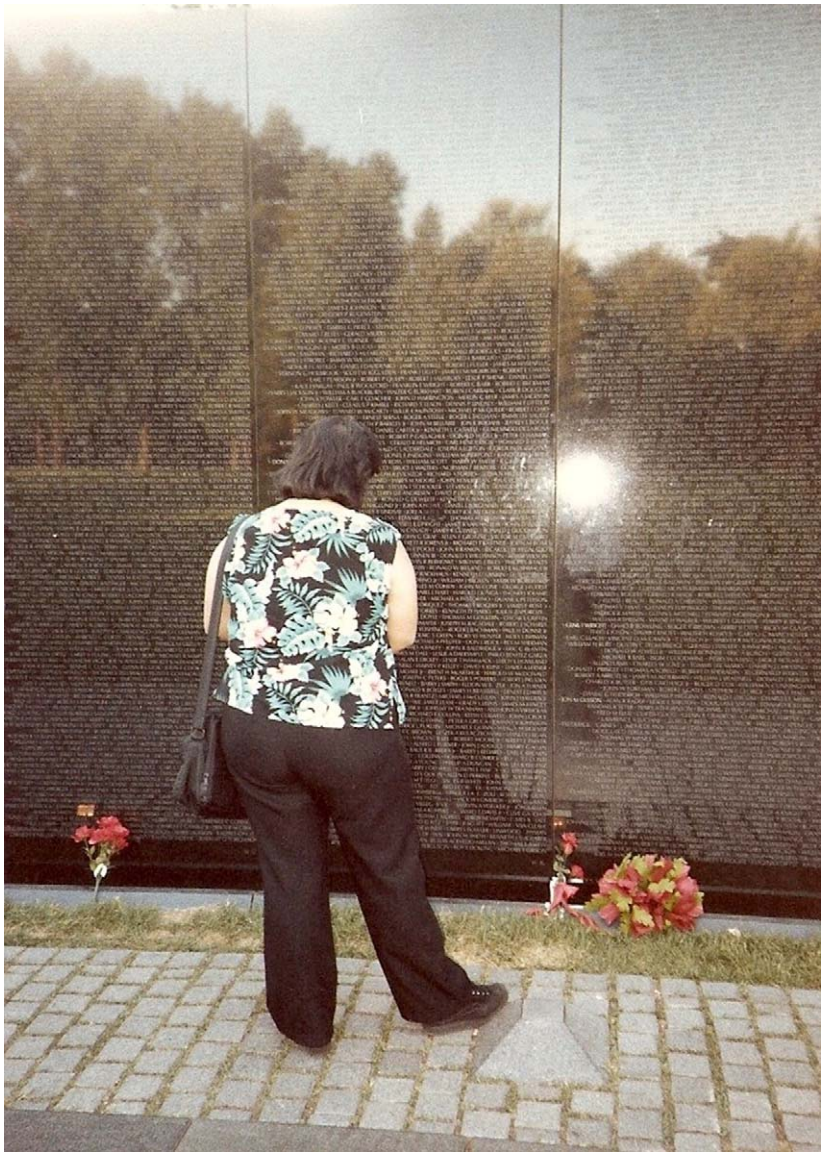

Figure 3. Kathy Garcia Windsor at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1986; photo used with her permission.

homage to his fallen comrades as well as the ones who remained missing in action.[61] And more wanted to do so, as the Wall became a shrine to visit for the Vietnam generation. Mike even made plans to travel with his sons on their motorcycles for a cross-country trip. However, he passed before he could make the journey.[62]

Those who visited often took the time to make rubbings of names and take pictures. They brought back memories of the Wall and morphed them onto other memories. Furthermore, some returned home with a commitment to create their own memorials that they could visit more often. The freeing of the country to honor the Vietnam veterans, both living and dead, as symbolized by the Wall, was an important step in the healing of a generation of warriors scarred by their experiences. Much more remains to be done, as evidenced by the continuing battles of the living with issues related to Agent Orange poisoning and PTSD, but it was a start, one that created a new set of tensions as the memorialization moved out of the private realm and increasingly into the public one.

The Vietnam Memorial became iconic and within a short time the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) commissioned the Moving Wall, a scale model of the original that could be transported across the country. Its supporters recognized that many people could not afford trips to Washington, D.C., and decided to make the powerful monument available to as many people as possible.

The Moving Wall traversed the country for nearly thirty years. While it visited Arizona several times, it did not reach southeastern Arizona until 2008. The VFW Auxiliary in Thatcher, with financial support from the Freeport-McMoran Company (the corporation that had bought out Phelps Dodge), and the cities of Safford, Thatcher, and Pima hosted the week-long event in early April. The 370-foot-long wall, eight feet high at the center of the memorial, had thirty-five black granite panels. A four-person team accompanied it, in part to set it up and also to serve as guides to help visitors locate their loved ones or friends. As one of the organizers of the event, Charlotte Reynolds, stressed, "the main focus is to provide the whole community a chance to honor, respect and remember those have paid the ultimate price for our freedom."[63]

61. Interview with Oscar Urrea by author, July 10, 2012, Tempe, Ariz.
62. Email from Joyce Cranford to author, June 22, 2012.
63. *Eastern Arizona Courier*, Dec. 2, 2007.

The Morenci Nine figured prominently in the ceremony. A limousine transported Clive and Julia Garcia from their small trailer house just outside Safford to the New Mexico line where they greeted and then led the large trucks transporting the Moving Wall to the temporary site. Leroy traveled over from Yuma to participate, taking time to pose for a picture with Julia.[64] Several people gave speeches, and others, including Steve Guzzo, played music that honored his friends from Morenci and Clifton who had fought and died in Vietnam. One veteran noted, "it's wonderful that the sponsors thought it was worthwhile and I appreciate it."[65]

Technological advances also brought different renditions of the Wall to people in Greenlee County. With the information revolution in the 1990s, several online versions of the Wall appeared. Volunteers poured countless hours of work into putting up the names of those who died in Vietnam. They listed units, date of birth and death, hometown, and the place on the real wall where their name appeared. It permitted people to post their condolences and memories, and some sites even allowed for a virtual rubbing that could be printed.

One well-done example, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—The Wall, features the Morenci Nine prominently.[66] Under the section "Names of the Wall," their story appears with others, including Beallesville, Ohio (population 475), which had 6 young men die in Vietnam, and Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia, which lost 54 young men. The Morenci story borrows heavily from the 1970 *Time* magazine article, stating "they led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered." Ultimately, the site highlighted that "only 3 returned home." It also listed all 6 who died and how they perished, although it did make some mistakes, such as claiming the enemy wiped out Robert's entire platoon.[67]

64. Email from Daniel Garcia to author, June 22, 2012.

65. *Eastern Arizona Courier*, March 30, 2008.

66. There are a couple of such constructions, including the official one of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Foundation, at http://www.thevirtualwall.org/, and others, including VietnamWall.org at http://www.vietnamwall.org/, which allows for a virtual rubbing of the wall that can be printed.

67. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, The Wall-USA, "Names on the Wall," at http://thewall-usa.com/names.asp.

Friends and family often left messages on the individual pages of the fallen. Bobby Dale's friend Rick Melton wrote: "Bobby, was a great friend" who "loved his family . . . .Bobby was like a brother to me. Wish he was still here with us." He concluded, "Just want him to know I've missed him a great deal and want to thank him and the rest for giving me and my family the freedom we have. Bobby, I know your life here on this earth was short but I thank you and the Good Lord for the times we had. May God bless YOU!!!"[68]

The Internet has changed the nature of memorials by making information accessible to more people and creating virtual communities often spread across the globe. While lacking the emotional power of the Wall and the ability to view the names of more than 58,000 Americans engraved in the black stone, the online version offers people a chance to research the fallen, to leave messages, and to interact with others. As the medium becomes more sophisticated, it will continue to assist in sustaining the memories and disseminating information about the Morenci Nine, as well as those from other communities that suffered so much during the war.[69]

Local efforts at publicly memorializing the Vietnam soldiers, including the Morenci Nine, followed on the heels of the national memorial. Time had allowed the community to heal partially from the open wounds caused by the losses. Furthermore, a change in the old guard in the veterans' community has occurred as Vietnam veterans have increasingly become leaders in local organizations such as the American Legion. As many reached their fifties and sixties, they have devoted more time to organizing and promoting acts of remembrance.

Yet challenges have surfaced in the efforts to remember the service and sacrifice of the Vietnam veteran. As historian John Bodnar notes, "the shaping of a past worthy of public commemoration in the present is contested and involves a struggle for supremacy between advocates of various political ideas and sentiments."[70] These unfolded on many levels, including the national one, as leaders like President Ronald Reagan tried to reframe the war as a noble cause. However, many Vietnam veterans resisted such efforts as demeaning

68. The Virtual Wall, Vietnam Memorial, "Robert Dale Draper," at http://www.virtualwall.org/dd/DraperRD01a.htm.

69. Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York, 2004), 153–155.

70. Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 13.

to the sense of loss and as undercutting the healing process. They also feared that such representations were smokescreens for Reagan's efforts to try to involve the United States in new military ventures in the jungles of El Salvador and Nicaragua.[71]

Such challenges also existed on the local level. How would Greenlee County commemorate Vietnam veterans, in particular those who lost their lives in Southeast Asia? Who would be included, and how would they be memorialized? What would be emphasized: sorrow and healing or renewed pride? What role would race play in the process of who received the focus? How would the events since the war shape the discourse of memory? Each of these questions had already played out to a degree in discussions related to the Wall, but debates at many levels, including the local ones, continued throughout the thirty-year period after the unveiling of the Wall.

Slowly, public manifestations of remembrance of the sacrifice of the Morenci Nine arose. Remembering them became a fundamental cornerstone of honoring the service of all of the Vietnam veterans from Greenlee County. They embodied all the major components of the Vietnam narrative for many in the mining towns of Arizona and in industrial centers across the country, such as sorrow, a desire for healing, and the demographics of the community. While the story continued to percolate in the private realm, it increasingly became part of a public discourse.

Newspapers helped keep the story alive in the public consciousness. Retrospectives, such as the tribute to the living and dead of the Morenci Nine in the *Mesa Tribune* on Veterans' Day in 1993, often appeared around patriotic holidays and reached large audiences. Another tribute, nearly two full pages, emerged several years later in the Memorial Day 2000 edition in the *Arizona Republic* and featured Mike, Joe, and Leroy. Both were extensive accounts and reached sizable numbers of readers in the Phoenix metropolitan area where many people originally from Morenci lived. The reports also educated many others about the Morenci Nine, introducing their story to transplants from the Midwest and West Coast who had flooded the Valley of the Sun since the end of the war.[72]

Even with such publicity, it still took a while before a permanent memorial to the Morenci Nine appeared in 1998 near Morenci High

71. Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 81.

72. *Mesa Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1993; *Arizona Republic*, April 30, 2000.

School—not the old three-story building that the young men had attended but the modern one down the hill from Clive's home on Gila Street. In late February 1998, the American Legion requested permission from the Morenci Unified School District's governing board to erect a monument holding a plaque dedicated to the Morenci Nine. District Superintendent David Woodall reported that people had suggested placing it near the main entrance to the high school.[73]

The plans went forward to construct the monument with the financial assistance of Phelps Dodge. Finally, on July 4, 1998, the organizers officially dedicated the memorial on the thirty-second anniversary of the Morenci Nine boarding a bus for boot camp. Family members of the group, including representatives of the Garcia, Moncayo, King, and Draper clans, joined Leroy and Mike outside the high school near the flagpole that many young people passed each day. More than 100 spectators attended, including Maj. Ruben Garcia, who traveled over from San Diego to represent the Marine Corps at the event.[74]

Before the formal ceremony, people circled around the memorial to view the four-foot-high pedestal constructed from local materials, including the turquoise-colored rock found in the riverbeds. Recessed into the front side was a plaque with the words "In Honor of 'The Marines From Morenci' Class of 1966." Underneath, organizers listed the names of the Nine and their rank, starting from the first who died and concluding with the three who came home. Small crosses placed to the lefthand side of their inscriptions signified the dead.[75]

On an overcast day with high thin clouds shielding the sun, the ceremony began. The participants watched members of an honor guard from the American Legion post line up, dressed in pressed

73. "Legion Plans Memorial at Morenci High School," *Copper Era*, no exact date given, in letters and papers of Clive Garcia, Jr. The proposal caught some people off-guard, including the families of the Morenci Nine. Julia Garcia wrote a letter to Dr. David Woodall, noting that "none of the parents of the young men have ever been contacted" about the memorial. Officials from the school district and people in the community, including those associated with the American Legion, worked to assuage the family's concerns, and the planning for the memorial went forward. Julia Garcia to Woodall, Feb. 22, 1998, among private letters of the Garcia family.

74. *Copper Era*, July 8, 1998.

75. Photos of the dedication were provided by Kathy Garcia Windsor. They constitute the materials used to reconstruct the event. Email from Kathy Garcia Windsor to author, June 24, 2012.

Figure 4. Dedication of the memorial at Morenci High School, July 4, 1998. From left to right, Leroy Cisneros, Mr. and Mrs. Glen King, Robert Draper, Clive and Julia Garcia, Ms. Louis Freniza (Robert Moncayo's mother), and Guy and Mike Cranford; used with the permission of Kathy Garcia Windsor.

white short-sleeved shirts, dark pants, and wearing blue berets—mostly Mexican American veterans who now composed a large segment of the organization. Once notified to start, they raised the American flag as spectators looked on. Then they stepped back several yards behind the memorial and stood at attention with their rifles.[76]

Several speakers stepped forward to talk about the memorial. At one point, organizers asked Leroy to speak. Dressed in black jeans and a grey polo with a black collar and wearing a large belt buckle and cowboy boots along with a red Marine baseball hat, he slowly moved forward and stood near the monument. Not a physically imposing figure and by nature relatively shy, he started his address by thanking everyone responsible for the memorial to his friends as he focused on those who died during the Vietnam War. Tearfully, he choked up and could not go on, so Mike joined him. Wearing blue jeans with a big belt buckle and boots, Mike stood out in his bright turquoise western shirt, a black cowboy hat, and dark aviator glasses. He continued to thank everyone for coming and honoring in particular his friends who had not made it home. Tears flowed from many in the crowd, wetting the small rocks surrounding the site.[77]

Once the speakers concluded their remarks, the honor guard stood smartly and fired a salute. Then a bugler played "Taps," the haunting sound sweeping the community, maybe even reaching as far away as the Bunker Hill Cemetery where Robert and Clive lay side by side. Once done, the important occasion for not only the Morenci Nine but also other Vietnam veterans concluded. People milled around taking pictures, including the parents as well as Mike and Leroy. Finally, they dispersed to celebrate the July 4th events that brought together young and old in the community to celebrate the nation's birthday and remember those who had played a role in defending their country.

The memorial at the entrance to the high school constituted the first permanent effort to remember the Morenci Nine. The people who chose the location of the memorial, near the front entrance of the high school, consciously placed it where future soldiers would pass. This tied into the community's pride in being a conduit for troops in the U.S. armed forces. A small percentage retained hopes of attending college, but military recruiters still found many willing

76. *Ibid.*

77. Email from Joyce Cranford to author, June 22, 2012.

volunteers, just as in 1966. The military remained an attractive outlet for many young men (and by this time women) to find a career outside of the boom-and-bust mining industry, one shrinking due to mechanization. Thus, the Morenci Nine remained a fundamental part of the lore of sacrifice and service for young people in the mining camp.

Many efforts, local and distant, big and small, continued to commemorate the service of the Morenci Nine. Stories about the Nine continued in the local *Copper Era* and *Eastern Arizona Courier*, and they became important segments of other memorials including the one on Mares Bluff, a large wall listing those killed in action in all wars at the American Legion Hall in Clifton, and a relief near the bell tower at Eastern Arizona College in Thatcher.[78]

An interesting act of remembrance developed in California where a memorial arose around a 160-year-old live oak tree in an empty field just outside of Banning and Beaumont on the outskirts of Los Angeles. During the First Persian Gulf War, someone tied a huge yellow ribbon around it and placed an American flag in front of it. Soon more flags appeared, with people leaving letters and photos of loved ones serving in the conflict. For years, local people maintained the informal monument.[79]

When the Iraq War started in 2003, the site took on new meaning. More flags appeared, as well as small white crosses honoring the dead. One day, Fred Knight, a dentist in nearby Cherry Valley and a native of Safford who had played football against members of the Morenci Nine, visited. As he looked at it, he noticed that a large white cross honoring the Morenci Nine had appeared near the back of the memorial and next to a fence. "Who put it there is unknown," Knight acknowledged but noted both his excitement and surprise, adding that it brought back many memories of home. No matter how it materialized and became a prominent part of the display, it highlighted a war long over and a community far removed from the Southern California landscape.[80]

For years, additional efforts at remembrance continued around the Morenci Nine. The account became a fundamental part of local history and increasingly that of the region. On Memorial Day in 2007, the *Arizona Republic* ran a story titled "5 Memories of Arizonans

78. *Eastern Arizona Courier*, Aug. 14, 2002; *ibid.*, May 3, 2003; 5 Sept. 5, 2007.
79. *Ibid.*, June 14, 2006.
80. *Ibid.*

Who Gave Their Lives for Their Country." The number one story listed was "The Marines of Morenci."[81] The story demonstrated just how far the Morenci Nine had permeated the consciousness of the region.

Two fundamental questions remain: Why were the Morenci Nine so important to the community (and even the region), and why was so much energy expended in acts of remembrance? There are a number of explanations, including the fact that honoring Vietnam veterans became more fashionable after the First Persian Gulf War and even more after the initiation of the Iraq War in 2003 that reinvigorated a warrior culture. These built on the efforts during the 1980s by Vietnam vets to secure their rightful place in the veterans' pantheon, so in large part it reflected larger national trends.

However, local dimensions added to the story. One related to the healing that the community needed, not only from the war but also from the added trauma of loss of the town itself, buried under tons of rocks as the mine expanded. The places where everyone had gone to high school, to sports events, to church, and special events disappeared over time, consumed by the mine. The houses of people like Clive Garcia survived, as did the cemetery, but the physical plant embedded with so many memories became a different landscape, one not allowing people to sustain the memories except through pictures and personal images that faded with time. Therefore, stories related to Old Morenci became valuable assets to those trying to hold on to the past.

The devastating 1983 strike added another trauma that pushed people to try to find the meaning of their lives *vis-à-vis* the country. The betrayal of the workers by the state government and by coworkers and neighbors who crossed the picket lines ensured frustrations. Many Vietnam veterans, albeit not all, stood strong, like Mike, Leroy, and Joe, but what about the workers who took their jobs who never put their lives on the line for their country when asked? What about the government that suddenly sent in the Arizona National Guard in riot gear with tear gas to drive them away from the picket lines? Mike and others expressed anger with the obvious treachery. In part, the story of the Morenci Nine became a way for Joe, Leroy, Mike, and others who served in the military to craft their own narrative about their place in the community and to juxtapose it against the selfish and cowardly actions of Phelps Dodge.

81. *Arizona Republic*, May 28, 2007.

Deep down, a sense of pride developed regarding the service and sacrifice of the Morenci Nine and other veterans. Many in Morenci held a fundamental belief in the superiority of small-town life and the idea that the hard-working miners represented the true values of America. Context was important. Like many Americans watching their televisions in the late 1960s and into the early 1970s, people in Greenlee County had been repulsed by the anti-Americanism of the long-haired, shabbily dressed, disrespectful hippies and college students that they saw on the nightly news at antiwar rallies. Reactively, they longed to emphasize that they represented a truer America, one based on hard work, respect for others, and devotion to God and country. At a time when they felt that the country had changed, they fought back by pointing out their sacrifices for the country.

Finally, the memorialization also raised the stature of Morenci in the eyes of its neighbors. Much as communities rally around their sports teams as a source of pride, Morenci could note that its young men had made the ultimate sacrifice for their country in the form of a blood sacrifice at a higher rate than others. It remained a cornerstone of the community's consciousness and highlighted the patriotism of Morenci, both inside and outside of the mining camp. It also played nicely into the importance of social constructions of masculinity within Morenci's self-perception as a camp of tough and dedicated patriots willing to answer the nation's call. While many privately continued to grieve, the pride associated with the service of the group underscored the community's commitment to more public acts to highlight the sacrifices.

But there was also some contestation in the process of public remembrance. While most Vietnam veterans recognized the value of the sacrifices of the Morenci Nine for highlighting those of all Vietnam veterans, a certain understandable ambivalence also emerged. Some believed that focusing on the Morenci Nine diminished the value of the service and sacrifices of others, especially those from the area who also lost their lives in Vietnam.

Several examples stand out, including the Mares Bluff Memorial. It was the brainchild of Steve Guzzo, a Vietnam veteran from Clifton who could have passed for the brother of Tommy Chong, complete with a long ponytail and intense, dark eyes. One night, Steve dreamed that God transported and then suspended him above the ultimate site for the memorial. There he received instructions on

how to build a line of dog tags strung underneath poles hoisting the flags of the various branches of the U.S. military, with an American flag nearer the edge of the bluff.[82]

Consequently, the memorial had strong religious symbols. Up the hill from the flags, a stand housed a Bible and a log where people could leave their reflections. Etched on a small plaque was the inscription "John 15:13," a reference to the verse that reads "No greater love does a man have than he would lay down his life for another." Along the steep path up the bluff, Steve also felt compelled to create signposts, like the Stations of the Cross, with the names of the dead from the various wars in which the veterans of Greenlee County fought. Ultimately, Guzzo envisioned the memorial as a place of healing for everyone in the community.[83]

Ultimately, thousands of dog tags of veterans have been strung under the flags, including those of Elvis Presley, John McCain, and Jimi Hendrix. Still, the Morenci Nine figure prominently in the display. They include the first ones placed on the line, starting from the left, bearing the names of Larry West, Clive Garcia, Jr., Stan King, Bobby Dale Draper, Van Whitmer, and Robert Moncayo. They also have their names on a stand with a plaque about three-quarters of the way up the steep path, for everyone from Greenlee County who died in World War I, World War II, and Korea, as well as Vietnam, has been memorialized on the signposts. Yet this memorial is more about all the veterans, rather than a select group like the one at the entrance to the high school.

Vietnam veterans took the lead on constructing both memorials, and, while they acknowledged the importance of the Morenci Nine, they folded that story into a larger narrative about those who fought and died from Greenlee County. In a newspaper article in late 2011, Guzzo highlighted the feeling of some regarding those who served in Vietnam, telling a reporter, "what brought it home, what made the impact, was the Morenci Nine." However, he added, "We can't forget our other people, either."[84]

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82. Steve Guzzo interview, May 23, 2003.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Whitney Phillips, "Decades after Vietnam, Community Preserves Memory of Morenci Nine," KTAR.com, Nov. 10, 2011, http://ktar.com/category/local-news-articles/20111110/Decades-after-Vietnam,-community-preserves-memory-of-Morenci-Nine/, accessed May 25, 2012.

The music of veterans also reflected ambivalence about concentrating too much on the Morenci Nine. In 2001 a high school classmate, Russ Gillespie (Class of 1965), put out an album of several songs including "Boys in Vietnam." While focused on his experience as a Navy veteran who returned to an ungrateful country, the song highlights that he wandered around after high school, but, when he returned, he found "all my friends gone to Vietnam." He emphasized, "I didn't want to go but couldn't stay," so he too ended up in Vietnam. One of the stanzas observes, "Heard all about my friends' demise in a letter from home. Seems they all got killed one day in a place on a map you cannot find. Oh, the article was splendid and the funerals they say was grand, a tribute to all the boys in Vietnam."[85]

The exploits of the Morenci Nine clearly shaped his viewpoint, as he later told a reporter that he was close to the group, including those who died. Yet he also stressed that he knew others who fell in Vietnam: Ronald Gene White from Morenci, as well as Joe Salinas and Eddie Lopez from Clifton. He acknowledged not knowing well the boys from Duncan, Manuel Thomas Montoya and William Niel Wilson, who also died in Vietnam, but he dedicated the song to them as well as his Morenci buddies.[86]

Gillespie's efforts reflected those of many veterans to find some understanding of the loss of not only his high school friends but also others from the area.[87] The focus on the Morenci Nine and the concern sometimes expressed by other veterans is understandable. Even Joe Sorrelman feared their story somehow mattering more than others.[88]

All the memories of the Vietnam veterans, both those who lived and those who died, should never be forgotten. As young men, most made a hard choice about service, and they endured significant challenges in training and combat. But the Morenci Nine provide an insight into the lives of the others and will continue to do so. Giving the others their due does not diminish the Nine but if anything amplifies the service and sacrifice of all Vietnam veterans.

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85. Russ Gillespie, "Boys in Vietnam," in album *Women Are Trouble*, Rusty Nail Records, Clifton, Ariz., 2002. Also see Steve Guzzo, "You Know Not What They See: True Story of a Viet-Nam Vet," Road Rash Studios, Clifton, Ariz., 2008.

86. *Eastern Arizona Courier*, Nov. 6, 2001.

87. Interview with Russ Gillespie by author, Nov. 24, 2003, Safford, Ariz.

88. Joe Sorrelman interview, July 20, 2003.

Despite some tensions, remembrance of the Morenci Nine has not been a static process and remains subject to influence by outside forces, including time and changes in America's perceptions about its military prowess. With the story increasingly part of not only the local but the regional consciousness relating to veterans, it will remain a cornerstone for many years of the narrative of the Vietnam War for those who fought.

Across the country since the end of the Vietnam War, small communities have faced similar challenges in dealing with the sorrow and anguish. While almost unique because of the clustering of deaths, Morenci shares a great deal in common with other small communities like St. Ignatius, Montana, War, West Virginia, Empire, Alabama, and Belen, New Mexico, which lost large numbers of young men, much higher proportionally than most American towns and cities during the Vietnam War. The process of remembrance undoubtedly strongly resembled the pattern of the individuals being the primary depositories of the memories in the initial stages, with public remembrances becoming more common after the 1980s. It was often a painful process, but one that over time brought some healing and closure. Still, for many, the wounds will never fully close.