

## Teacher-Led Activities

# Michigan Vietnam Veterans Monument

## Description

The Michigan Vietnam Monument honors the Michigan residents who served and those who died in the Vietnam War during the 1960s –1975. The monument is located in Michigan Veterans Memorial Park, Lansing.

Designed by New York architect Alan Gordon, the monument features an arc-shaped steel wall that is 120 feet long and 10 feet high. It is suspended three feet above the ground, supported by a steel tension cable.

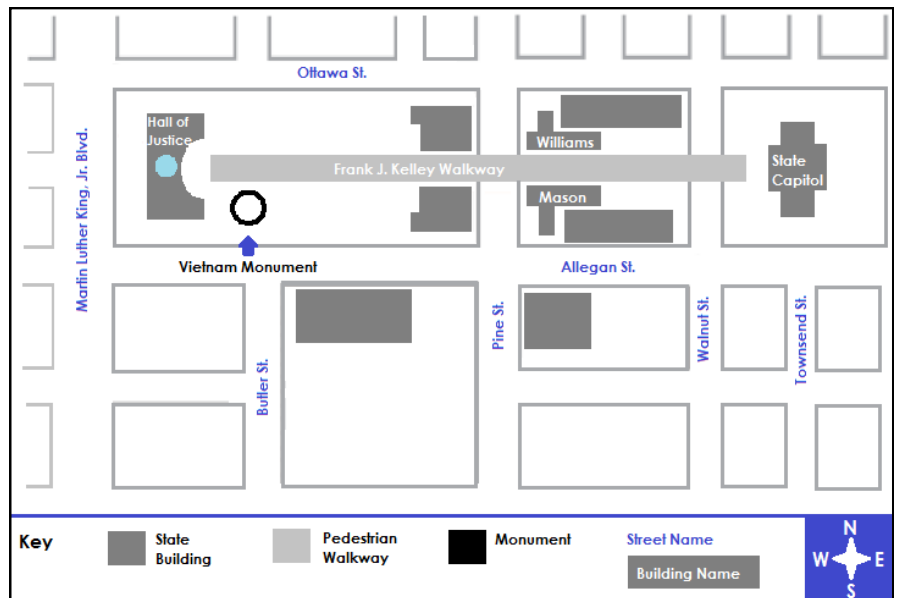
The names of casualties from Michigan are listed by county in alphabetical order on 15 lighted plaques made of brushed steel. Names of those Missing in Action (MIA) at the time of construction are bracketed with asterisks. An alphabetical list of names in an engraved book and a scale model are located near the northwest entrance to the monument. At the east end a plaque describes the purpose of the memorial. A timeline of events from 1959 to 1975 appears on the north side of the steel wall.

Opposite the wall, an arc-shaped bench includes metal plates to represent casualties from U.S. states and territories, plus those who are unknown.

## Monument



## Location



**Suggested Activities** – What Is a War Memorial? ▪ Be a Detective ▪ Find Names from Your County ▪ Hold a Memorial Ceremony ▪ Be an Artist ▪ Be a Writer ▪ Focus Your Voice

**Curriculum Subjects** – Social Studies, ELA, Math, Science, Art, Music

# Dedication Plaque

## Glossary

**Controversial** – Many people disagree about something.

**Missing in Action** – A member of the armed forces who is missing. It is unknown where they are or what happened to them.

**Prisoner of War** – A member of the armed forces captured by the enemy.

**Sacrificed** – Gave up something, especially for the common good.

**Turmoil** – In disorder; confused; upset.

**Vietnam** – A country in Southeast Asia. The United States fought a war there, 1960s–1975.

## Other Words

---



---



---



---



---

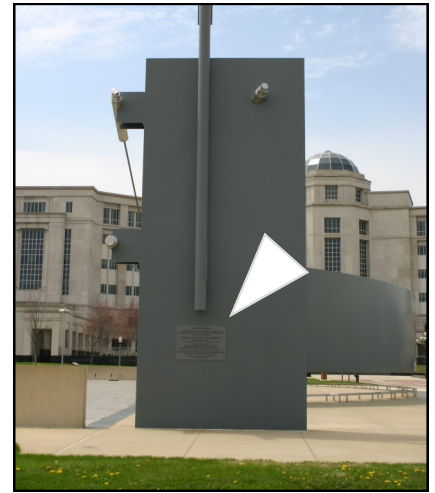


---



---

## Location



## Transcription

### VMC Mission Statement

The Michigan Vietnam Monument Project is an opportunity to recognize, honor, and learn from both the Michigan residents who served, and from those who, by death, missing in action, or prisoner of war sacrificed their life in Vietnam.

The Monument is intended to provide a place for future generations to reflect upon America’s longest and most controversial war, one that divided the nation, and was fought by soldiers whose average was 19 years.

Completion of construction will continue the healing process for the Vietnam veterans, their family members, and the countless numbers of individuals and organizations who were profoundly affected by this war.

The monument’s dedication will provide the “welcome home” Bypassed during the turmoil of that time. To this end we dedicate our labors, And invite the State and the Nation to join in this task.

Michigan Vietnam Monument Commissioners  
November 11, 2001

## Suggested Activities

**What Is a War Memorial?** Discuss with students the purpose of a war memorial and the type of behavior that is expected.

- A war memorial is something that reminds visitors of people who served in a war. Sometimes a war memorial is an object, like a statue or sculpture. Other times it is a place, such as a cemetery or garden. A war memorial can also be a living thing, such as a tree.
- Respectful behavior is expected at all times. People visit war memorials to honor those who served in a war. Visitors are often thoughtful and quiet when they look at the memorial and read the words. Sometimes they leave objects, such as flowers or flags to honor those they are remembering. It is all right to get close to a memorial, but it is never appropriate to climb on it. Visitors should never litter.

**Curriculum Subjects** – Social Studies, ELA

---

**Be a Detective** – Encourage students to learn as much as possible about the monument by reading the dedication plaque (see page 2) and investigating the monument itself. Questions might include:

- Who does it honor? *Vietnam veterans, especially those from Michigan.*
- When was the Vietnam War? *The timeline on the north side shows major events 1959-1975.*
- When was the monument dedicated? *November 11, 2001.*
- What do you think it is made of? *Steel and concrete.*
- How is the wall supported? *A steel cable anchored between two piers.*
- What shapes or patterns do you see? *Arcs, rectangles cylinders, etc.*
- What do you think the monument looks like from above? *A scale model is located near the northwest entrance to the monument.*

**Curriculum Subjects** – Social Studies, ELA, Math, Science

---

**Find Names from Your County** – The names of casualties (those who died as a result of the war) are listed by county on the face of the monument.

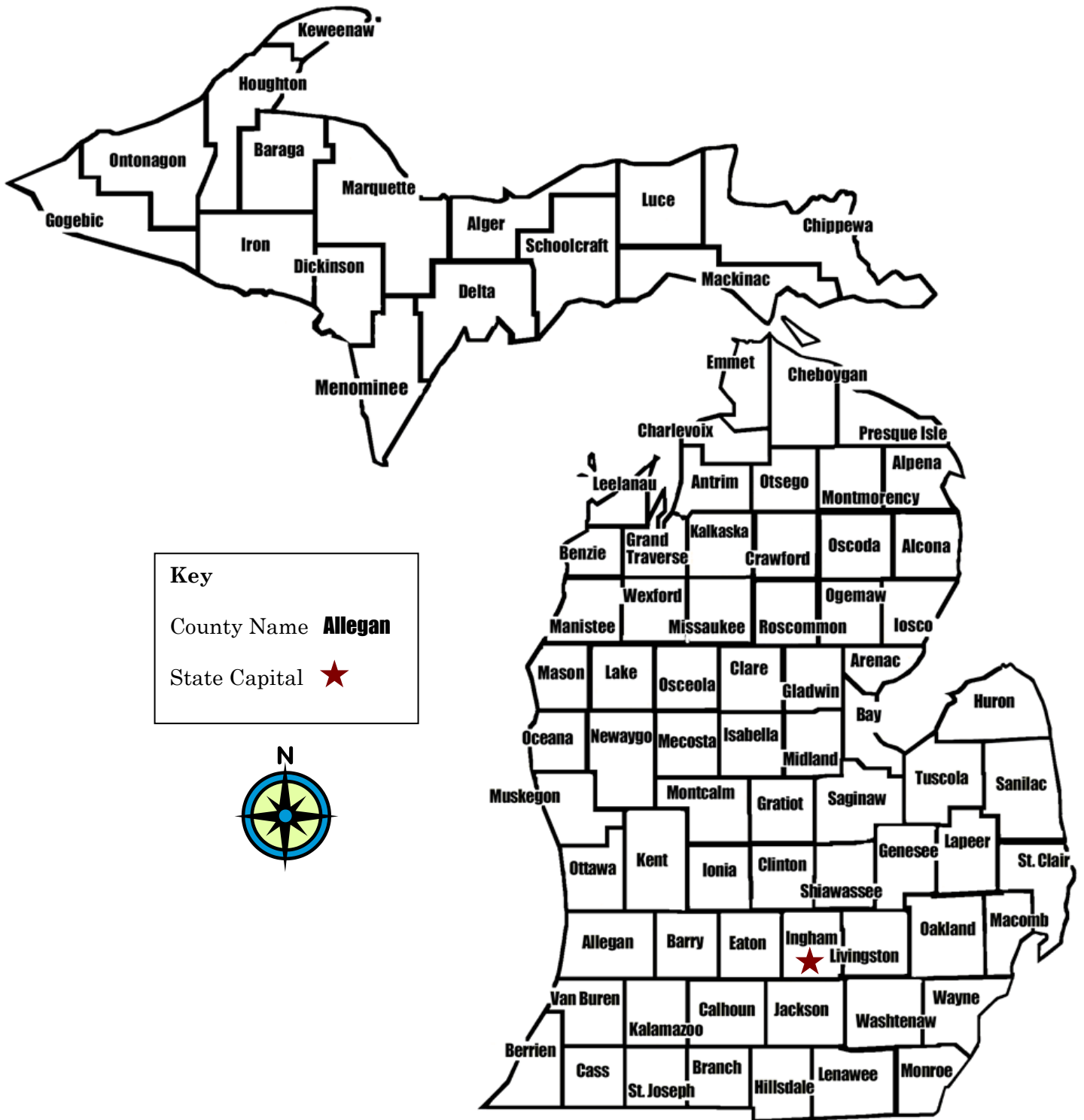
A book with an alphabetical list is located at the west side of the monument. *You may preview the names online at [http://www.michigan.gov/dmva/0,4569,7-126-2362\\_8490---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dmva/0,4569,7-126-2362_8490---,00.html).*

- Find your county on the map of Michigan provided (see page 4).
- Locate your county on the monument. County names are in alphabetical order.
- Scan the list of names. Some names may be familiar to students, and some may even be family members.

**Curriculum Subjects** – Social Studies, ELA

---

# Map of Michigan Counties





**Hold a Memorial Ceremony** – Consider reading the list of names from your county or singing a patriotic song, such as “America the Beautiful.”

**Curriculum Subjects** – ELA, Music

---

**Be an Artist** – Ask students to sketch the monument, concentrating on the geometric shapes and patterns.

**Curriculum Subjects** – Art, Math

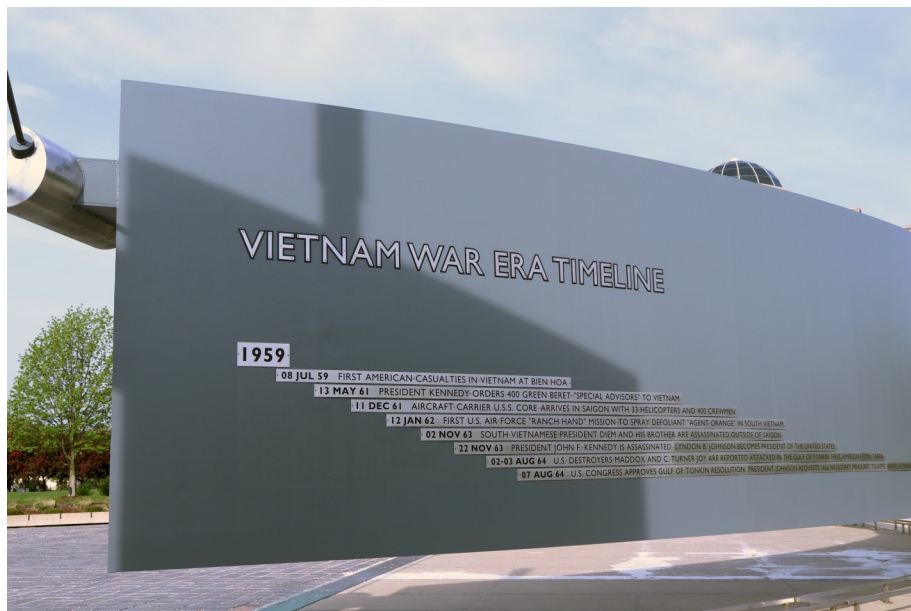
---

**Be a Writer** – Have students respond to the monument through writing poems or journal entries, responding to prompts such as:

- How does the monument make you feel?
- Do you think the monument helps to “continue the healing process” for those affected?
- What did you learn about the Vietnam War?

**Curriculum Subjects** – ELA, Social Studies

---



**Focus Your Voice** – The sound of your voice bounces off a surface by what is called “reflection.” The curved shape of the monument’s wall focuses sound because it is an arc (part of a circle). Can you find where the sound is loudest when you say something?

- Read the above explanation to the class.
- To illustrate the concept of sound reflection, first have students line up along the curved wall, standing 2–3 feet away. Have the group say a word, such as “honor,” in unison just louder than a normal speaking level. Then ask, “What did you hear?” They should hear the word reflected back to them in a slight echo. If it is windy or there is a lot of noise, such as a lawn mower or leaf blower in the area, they will need to listen carefully.
- To find where the arc focuses the sound, divide the class into groups of 3–5. Ask each group to stand where they think the sound will be loudest in the area between the wall and the curved bench. To make the experiment most effective, avoid pointing out the “V” marked in the pavement and wait until the final step to reveal the illustration on page 7; however, you may wish to encourage some groups to stand closer to that location than others.
- Now, have each group say the word, one group at a time, just louder than a normal speaking level. Ask each group, “How loud was it from 0–10?” Be sure all groups hear every answer.
- Next, each group should decide whether the members think they have found where the reflected sound is the loudest. If so, they may stay where they are. Otherwise, they should move to another location, making an educated guess as to where the sound might be loudest. Repeat the previous step.
- There is a dramatic difference in the sound level at the focus, so groups will likely converge quickly after it has been found. Once all the groups end up together at the focus, reveal the illustration on page 7. Discuss the illustration and their findings. Prompts might include:
  - ◇ How did you choose where you would stand each time?
  - ◇ Were you surprised by the difference in the sounds you heard?
  - ◇ Were there reasons other than location that changed how well you could hear (e.g. wind, lawn mowers, other people talking)?

### More Information (High School Reading Level)

Waves – Reflection, Refraction, and Diffraction

<http://www.physicsclassroom.com/Class/waves/u10l3b.cfm>

Sound Waves – Reflection, Refraction, and Diffraction

<http://www.physicsclassroom.com/class/sound/Lesson-3/Reflection,-Refraction,-and-Diffraction>

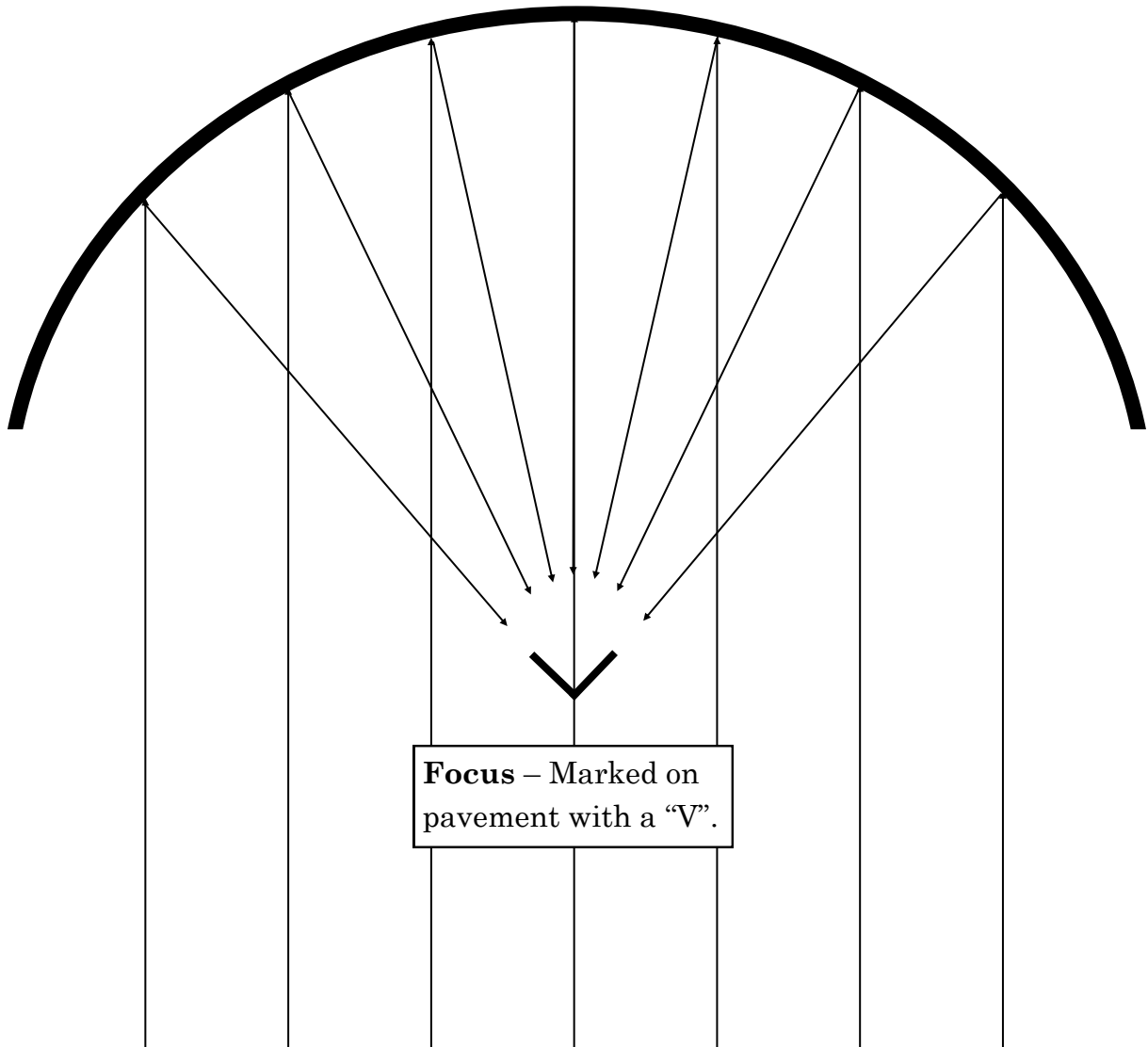
Reflection and the Ray Model of Light – Spherical Aberration

<http://www.physicsclassroom.com/class/refln/Lesson-3/Spherical-Aberration>

**Curriculum Subjects** – Math, Science

---

Focus Your Voice



<b>Key</b>	
Student Voices (Sound Waves)	→
Wall (Arc)	⤿
Place	Where Sound Is Loudest

## Additional Resources

### Michigan Vietnam Monument

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Michigan.gov  
[www.michigan.gov/dmva/0,4569,7-126-2362\\_8490---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dmva/0,4569,7-126-2362_8490---,00.html)

Lists Michigan casualties alphabetically and by county; also includes driving directions, rules and regulations, and a speech from the dedication on November 11, 2001.

### Vietnam War

An Overview of the Vietnam War, NC Civic Education Consortium  
[civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/VietnamWar71.pdf](http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/VietnamWar71.pdf)

Includes a summary of the Vietnam War for teachers, a timeline, and lessons for Grade 7.

### Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Washington, D.C.)

The Wall that Heals, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund  
[www.vvmf.org/userfiles/files/PDF/TWTH%20Field%20Trip%20Guide\(1\).pdf](http://www.vvmf.org/userfiles/files/PDF/TWTH%20Field%20Trip%20Guide(1).pdf)

Includes memorial etiquette, brief background information about the memorial, and onsite activities that could be applied to the memorial in Lansing.

### POW-MIA

POW-MIA Flag, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
[www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/powmia.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/powmia.pdf)

Offers a history of the POW-MIA flag and instructions for displaying it.

