



October 3, 2016

Dear Residents:

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the Michigan Vietnam Veteran Traveling Memorial passed through Westphalia and its way to Fowler/Westphalia/Pewamo VFW Post 3733. On this beautiful sunny day with the American flags waving in the breeze, a procession lead by 100+ members of the Patriot Riders Motorcycle Club, the Westphalia Township Fire Department, the Clinton County Sheriff's Office and local veterans riding in a vintage era army personnel carrier, escorted the Memorial through the Village. It was wonderful to see our streets lined with so many residents, young and old, to honor these heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Hopefully you were able to visit the Memorial while it was on display at the VFW Post in Fowler. I visited the Memorial and it was truly a moving experience. To see the 2,661 names on the Wall really drives home the sacrifices made by these heroes. Each name on the Wall represents someone's son, grandson, brother, or friend. They also may be someone's husband, father, or boyfriend. The affect of each soldier's death on his loved ones is immeasurable. Our own native son, Robert Thelen was killed in action on February 21, 1971. Personally, my brother-in-law Bill Coughlin served in Vietnam and his younger brother Patrick was killed in action on April 9, 1968 at the age of 19.

As I was thanking the veterans for their service and for bringing the Memorial to our area, they commented that of all the places they have taken the memorial (and it's been all over the state), never have so many children and young people come out to pay tribute to these fallen heroes. What a great show of respect by our youth and what a wonderful reflection of our local communities.

Recognition of all veterans at the PW varsity football game on September 1<sup>st</sup> was also remarkable. Each player and coach dedicated the game to a veteran of their choice and the name of each these veterans was announced prior to the start of the game. Local veterans were also honored with a special on-field ceremony at the game.

The Cemetery Walk was a great success with over 250 people attending on a beautiful day. The Oktoberfest was also an excellent event with the large crowd enjoying the comradery of their friends and neighbors. We thank the Westphalia Historical Society for sponsoring the Cemetery Walk and teaming up with the Knights of Columbus for the Oktoberfest. These are wonderful events for all to enjoy. We are also looking forward to the Light Parade on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

We continue to hear concerns about the speed of traffic entering and leaving the Village and the Sheriff's Office has been notified of the situation. Please slow down to ensure the safety of all, especially our school children.

Autumn colors are here, get out and enjoy the natural beauty we are blessed with here in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Dean Kohagen, President  
Village of Westphalia