'We won't forget'

Rolf Kriken
Contributing writer
he San Francisco
Swords to
Plowshares has
been helping veterans since 1974. Michal
McDonell has donated
the sculpture "Stepped
Out" for this year's
annual auction on Nov.
11.

As the sculptor of "Stepped Out," I am honored that proceeds of this auction will benefit our Veterans.

Jim Camper grew up in the small town of Manteca, Calif., joined the Army and was sent to Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Division. He was wounded in June 1966 and remained hospitalized for seven months before returning to Vietnam for a second tour in 1968.

Jim knew seven of the sixteen young men from Manteca who were killed in the Vietnam War. Those seven were on the Manteca High School's wrestling team and four had been his schoolmates from kindergarten. In 1989, he determined to create a memorial to these sixteen men who never came home.

From the foothills surrounding a swimming hole near Knights Ferry, frequented by all sixteen during their school days, Jim collected fourteen 500-pound rocks. Another rock came from Yosemite where the family of Joseph Lewis used to visit. The sixteenth and final rock came from a Pacifica beach in honor of Charles Wright who served in the Navy. Jim chiseled and smoothed each of the rocks by hand, creating areas to insert bronze plagues that named and described each of the sixteen men. The plaques for the memorial were

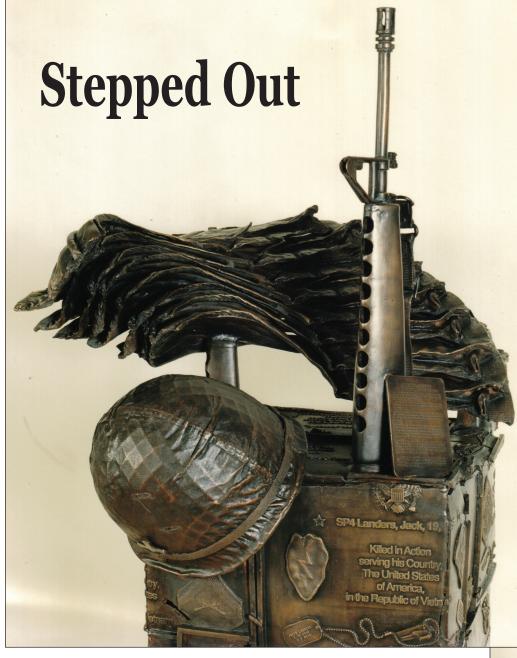


Photo courtesy Rolf Kriken

It was important to express the loss and weight of war; hence the stacked flak jackets spiraling out, the things the soldiers carried (Code of Conduct, helmet, rifle barrel), all over a base of fragmented plaques. This unique sculpture is 76 1/2" high, 21" wide and 21" deep.

created by myself, Rolf Kriken.

When the plaques were finished, Jim drove them to the Golden Gate Bridge and set them out in formation for their final view of the Bay; then he drove them to the beach for their final view of the Pacific Ocean. The plaques were then permanently installed into the stones and

placed at the Brock Elliot Elementary School in Manteca, dedicated on May 25, 1991.

I share this story of Jim
Camper to give you an
idea of the impact memorials have on people and
how new work takes
form, as in this sculpture,
"Stepped Out." Jim completed his memorial, but
it was not yet over for me.
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to express the loss and weight of war; hence the stacked flak jackets spiraling out, the things the soldiers carried (Code of Conduct, helmet, rifle barrel), all over a base of fragmented plaques.

This sculpture arrived out of trying to carry on Jim Camper's promise, "We won't forget."

EMPLOYMENT

SUPPORT: Swords to

Plowshares helps veter-

ans make the transition

to gainful employment,

life-skills training, resume preparation and job refer-

LEGAL SERVICES:

Many of our country's

veterans never apply for

or receive the benefits

they deserve. Swords to

Plowshares is one of the

few organizations in the

country that provides free

attorney representation, case management and

advocacy to indigent vet-

erans seeking benefits.

Swords to Plowshares

rals.

War causes wounds and suffering that last beyond the battlefield. Swords to Plowshares mission is to heal the wounds, to restore dignity, hope and self-sufficiency to all veterans in need, and to significantly reduce homelessness and poverty among veterans.

Founded in 1974, Swords to Plowshares is a community-based notfor-profit organization that provides counseling and case management, employment and training, housing and legal assistance to homeless and low-income veterans. We promote and protect the rights of veterans through advocacy, public education and partnerships with local, state and national entities.

Overtheyearsthename Swords to Plowshares has become synonymous with excellence in serving veterans in need, a highly visible yet dramatically underserved population. We developed a model of coordinated care based on the philosophy that the many obstacles veterans face - including homelessness, unemployment and disability-are interrelated and require an integrated network of support.

FRONTLINE DROP-IN CENTER: Provides mental health services, including counseling for drug and alcohol problems and PTSD.

S U P P O R T I V E HOUSING: Permanent supportive housing combined with options for counseling, academic instruction

and vocational training.

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– Rolf Kriken



