

Hi Grandpa,

My daddy took me here to this place called The Wall to meet you today. I've heard so many wonderful stories about you and am sad that I have never met or seen you. All my friends go places and do things with their grandpa's and I wish you were here to do them with me too. I'm eight years old now. Daddy talks about you all the time and how he was my age when you went to Vietnam. We are always looking at your pictures and all the ones you sent home from Vietnam.

He told me about the day you left and how tight you held him when you said goodbye at the airport. He said you were crying and that was the only time he had ever seen you cry. It's as if you knew you weren't going to come home. You know, that's the only time I ever see my daddy cry is when we are talking about you. He says the country you and he loves so much won't do anything to bring you home.

I told my daddy that I didn't like Vietnam because it made our whole family sad. He took me out back by the pond and we sat for awhile and talked. He told me a little bit about Vietnam and that the people in the South needed our help. He said our country, being the greatest country in the world, had a duty to help and that all the brave men and women who went to fight were proud to have done so. I think I understand it better now but I still don't understand why people had to die. Why do people have to fight? The hardest thing I have understanding is that you might still be alive over there and why somebody doesn't bring you home. Maybe when I get older I will better understand but right now I just know I miss you even though I have never met you.

Every night daddy and I kneel in front of your picture and we say a prayer. Sometimes when I'm lying in bed and thinking about you, I hear you say you are ok and that you love me. Daddy says it's my imagination so I just shrug my shoulders but we know better don't we grandpa? Somehow I know you are watching out for mommy, daddy and me.

I'm going into the forth grade this year. I like school most of the time. I have a teacher who talks about the Vietnam war. Her husband is a Vietnam Veteran and he comes to talk to us sometimes. He is in a wheelchair and has no legs. He looks very old and more like my teacher's father than her husband. When he talks to us about the war, he gets tears in his eyes. One day one of the girls in my class went up to him and put her arms around him and told him not to be sad. She told him to be happy that he was alive because her grandpa died in Vietnam. He looked at her, gave her a big hug and told her that he wasn't sad because he had to live in a wheelchair but because of all the friends he had who didn't come home. He told us that he still had a lot of friends who were captured or came up missing and that there is a chance that those men could still be alive and even if they weren't, he could not visit their graves and pay his respects because they aren't in their own country. It was very strange but the whole class spoke at one time and asked, "Why don't we just go get them?" I'm not sure why but that made him cry even more and he had to leave our classroom. When my teacher came back in she told us about the POW's and MIA's in Vietnam. Then I told her about you and that you could still be alive in Vietnam too. Our next class project is going to be to write to our Senators, Congressmen, and even to the President asking them WHY we don't just go get them.

I love to play soccer Grandpa. I wish you could be there to watch me play. I'm pretty good. Sometimes I think you are there. I also like to play baseball and football. I had a pet frog until last week. I used to keep him in my back pocket and I fell off my bike and well... that was the end of him. Mom had to wash my pants three times. Boy was she mad. She said I could have a pet rock now but I couldn't carry it in my back pocket though. Well Grandpa, I have to go now. My dad wants to talk to you and he's crying so my mom is going to take me for a walk and see all the statues around the park. I will keep praying that someday you come home and we can toss a ball together or you can tell me some stories like you used to tell my dad.

I love you Grandpa and I miss you.