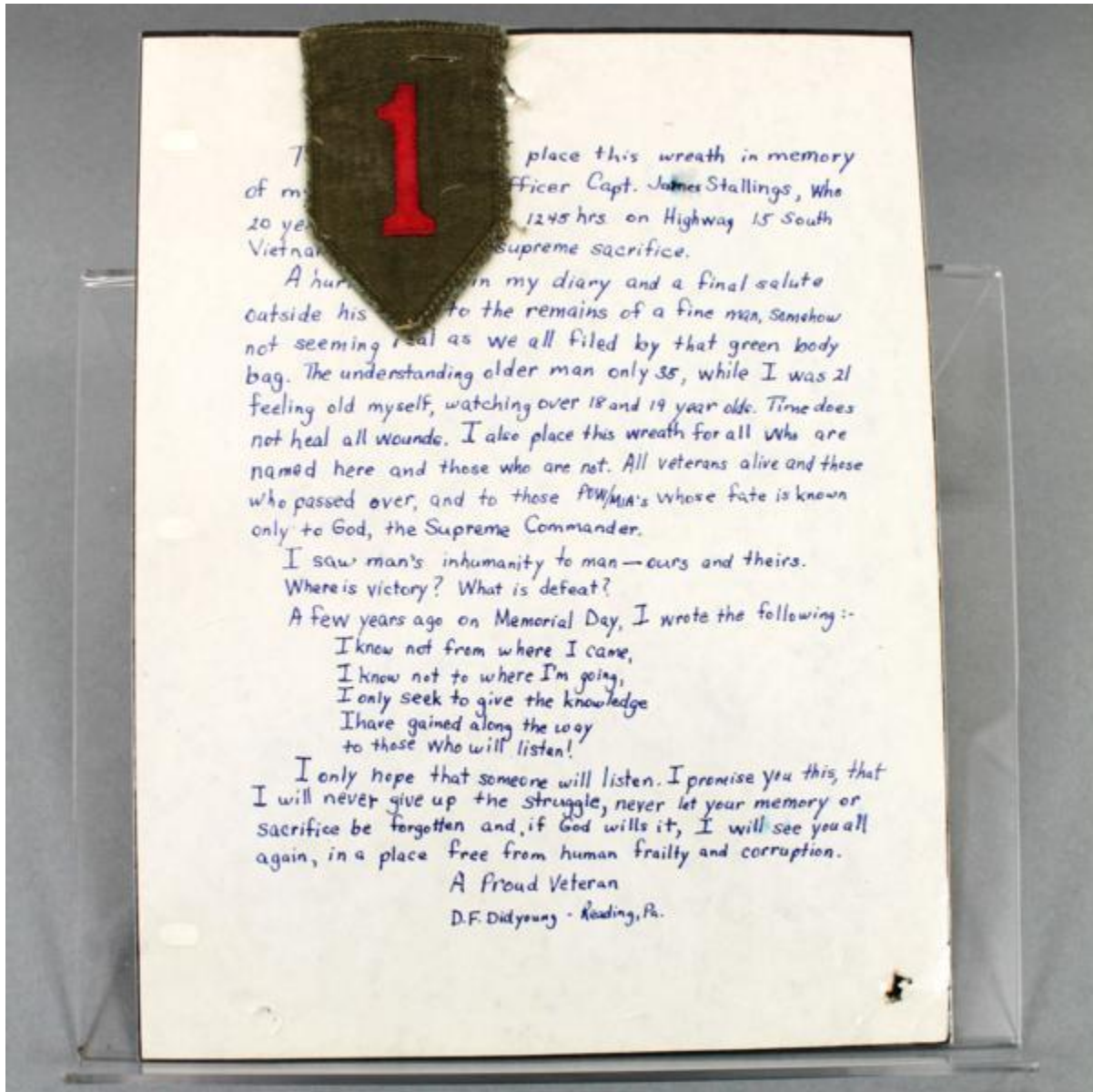


LETTER, HANDWRITTEN



SEE ALL PHOTOS (2)

From the collection of the National Park Service, National Mall and Memorial Parks.



- **Catalog Number:**VIVE 09045
- **Accession Date:**10/22/1986
- **Associated Name(s) on The Wall:**JAMES D STALLINGS , JAMES D STALLINGS
- **Item Summary:**Handwritten letter dedicated to U.S. Army Captain (CPT) James D. Stallings. The letter is signed, "A Proud Veteran / D. F. Didyoung - Reading, Pa." and opens with the line, "Today 26 Sep 86 I place this wreath in memory of my Commanding Officer Capt. James Stallings, who 20 years ago today at 1245 hrs. on Highway 15 South Vietnam made the supreme sacrifice." The letter is housed inside a plastic sheet protector bearing an affixed military issue, cloth patch U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division shoulder sleeve insignia, full color. The insignia consists of an od green shield (single point down) bearing the embroidered red Arabic numeral, "1" at the center. The Arabic numeral, "1" at the center of the insignia identifies the division's numerical designation and alludes to the division's nickname, "Big Red One". The insignia was originally authorized by the U.S. Army for use by the 1st Infantry Division on 31 October 1918. The insignia was re-designated for the 1st Infantry Division on 19 August 1942. The artifact was left at The Wall by U.S. Army and Vietnam veteran D. F. Didyoung on September 26, 1986. (Source: The Institute of Heraldry- <http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil>)
- **Accession Group:**VIVE-00031
- **Record Component Qty:**2
- **Item Description:**HANDWRITTEN LETTER DEDICATED TO U.S. ARMY CAPTAIN (CPT) JAMES D. STALLINGS. THE OBJECT CONSISTS OF A LETTER HANDWRITTEN IN BLUE INK AND BLOCK SCRIPT/ARABIC NUMERALS UPON A RECTANGULARLY SHAPED SHEET OF WHITE, UNLINED, LETTER-SIZED PAPER. THE LETTER IS SIGNED, "A PROUD VETERAN / D. F. DIDYOUNG - READING, PA." AND OPENS WITH THE LINE, "TODAY 26 SEP 86 I PLACE THIS WREATH IN MEMORY OF MY COMMANDING OFFICER CAPT. JAMES STALLINGS, WHO 20 YEARS AGO TODAY AT 1245 HRS. ON HIGHWAY 15 SOUTH VIETNAM MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE." IN CONTENT, THE AUTHOR RECOLLECTS, "A HURRIED NOTE IN MY DIARY AND A FINAL SALUTE OUTSIDE HIS TENT TO THE REMAINS OF A FINE MAN",

CHARACTERIZES HIS DEPARTED COMMANDING OFFICER AS AN, "[...] UNDERSTANDING OLDER MAN ONLY 35", RECOLLECTS BEING A TWENTY-ONE (21) YEAR-OLD IN CHARGE OF EIGHTEEN (18) AND NINETEEN (19) YEAR-OLDS, AND STATES UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT, "TIME DOES NOT HEAL ALL WOUNDS." THE AUTHOR THEN PROCEEDS TO, "[...] PLACE THIS WREATH FOR ALL WHO ARE NAMED HERE AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT. / ALL VETERANS ALIVE AND THOSE WHO PASSED OVER, AND TO THOSE POW/MIA's WHOSE FATE IS KNOWN ONLY TO GOD, THE SUPREME COMMANDER", QUOTES A PASSAGE HE HAD PREVIOUSLY WRITTEN ON MEMORIAL DAY REGARDING HIS LIFE'S JOURNEY, AND MAINTAINS THAT, "I ONLY HOPE THAT SOMEONE WILL LISTEN." MR. DIDYOUNG THEN CONCLUDES HIS LETTER WITH THE LINE, "I PROMISE YOU THIS, THAT I WILL NEVER GIVE UP THE STRUGGLE, NEVER LET YOUR MEMORY OR SACRIFICE BE FORGOTTEN AND, IF GOD WILLS IT, I WILL SEE YOU ALL AGAIN, IN A PLACE FREE FROM HUMAN FRAILTY AND CORRUPTION." THE LETTER IS PRESENTLY HOUSED INSIDE A CLEAR POLY-PLASTIC, THREE (3) HOLE-PUNCHED SHEET PROTECTOR BACKED AT THE REVERSE OBJECT SURFACE WITH A LETTER-SIZED SHEET OF BLACK CONSTRUCTION PAPER. THE MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER'S INFORMATION, "MOVER'S BOOKMART #5 SHEET PROTECTOR" IS STAMPED BLACK INK AND VERTICALLY-ORIENTED BLOCK SCRIPT/ARABIC NUMERALS ALONG THE PROPER LEFT-HAND EDGE OF THE REVERSE OBJECT SURFACE OF THE SHEET PROTECTOR. AFFIXED, VIA SINGLE METAL STAPLE, TO THE UPPER, CENTER EDGE OF THE OBVERSE OBJECT SURFACE OF THE SHEET PROTECTOR IS A MILITARY ISSUE, CLOTH PATCH U.S. ARMY 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION SHOULDER SLEEVE INSIGNIA, FULL COLOR. THE OBJECT CONSISTS OF AN OD GREEN AND RED FABRIC PATCH IN THE FORM OF AN OD GREEN SHIELD (SINGLE POINT DOWN) WITH AN EMBROIDERED OD GREEN EXTERIOR BORDER AND BEARING THE EMBROIDERED RED ARABIC NUMERAL, "1" AT THE

CENTER OF THE SHIELD. THE ARABIC NUMERAL, "1" AT THE OBVERSE OBJECT SURFACE OF THE INSIGNIA IDENTIFIES THE DIVISION'S NUMERICAL DESIGNATION AND ALLUDES TO THE DIVISION'S NICKNAME, "BIG RED ONE". THE INSIGNIA WAS ORIGINALLY AUTHORIZED BY THE U.S. ARMY FOR USE BY THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION ON 31 OCTOBER 1918. THE INSIGNIA WAS RE-DESIGNATED FOR THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION ON 19 AUGUST 1942. (SOURCE: THE INSTITUTE OF HERALDRY-
[HTTP://WWW.TIOH.HQDA.PENTAGON.MIL](http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil))

- **Associated Item Text:**Text of the handwritten, embroidered, & stamped inscriptions upon the various object surfaces is transcribed in full, as follows: [Obverse object surface, handwritten inscriptions] "Today 26 Sep 86 I place this wreath in memory of my Commanding Officer Capt. James Stallings, who 20 years ago today at 1245 hrs. on Highway 15 South Vietnam made the supreme sacrifice. / A hurried note in my diary and a final salute outside his tent to the remains of a fine man, somehow not seeming real as we all filed by that green body bag. / The understanding older man only 35, while I was 21 feeling old myself, watching over 18 and 19 year olds. / Time does not heal all wounds. / I also place this wreath for all who are named here and those who are not. / All veterans alive and those who passed over, and to those POW/MIA's whose fate is known only to God, the Supreme Commander. / I saw man's inhumanity to man - ours and theirs. / Where is victory? / What is defeat? / A few years ago on Memorial Day, I wrote the following:- / I know not from where I came, / I know not to where I'm going, / I only seek to give the knowledge / I have gained along the way / to those who will listen! / I only hope that someone will listen. / I promise you this, that I will never give up the struggle, never let your memory or sacrifice be forgotten and, if God wills it, I will see you all again, in a place free from human frailty and corruption. / A Proud Veteran / D. F. Didyoung - Reading, Pa." / [Obverse object surface, affixed cloth patch insignia, embroidered inscription] "1" / [Reverse object surface, proper left-hand edge, stamped inscription] "MOVER'S BOOKMART #5 SHEET PROTECTOR"
- **Item Dimensions and Weight:**

- Item Weight:27.2g (Collective weight of handwritten letter & insignia patch)
- Item Length:28.1cm
- Item Width:21.7cm
- Item Height:N/A
- Item Depth:N/A
- **Item Notes:**Dimensions listed above are for the handwritten letter & sheet protector only, with the exception of, "Weight" which is a collective measurement of the handwritten letter, sheet protector, & U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division shoulder sleeve insignia. Measurements for the cloth patch insignia are as follows:

[Cloth patch shoulder sleeve insignia]:

9.2cm (L) X 5.5cm (W) X 27.2g (Collective weight of handwritten letter & insignia patch)