

## **Arlington West - How To**

Permits etc.

We are very fortunate to have a progressive and tolerant city government. We have gotten permits when needed. The permits did cost money and contributions from visitors paid for the permits and material for the crosses. When asked by people if they could contribute, we say yes we have expenses. Remember that this is an expression of free speech. The crosses are also a religious symbol. Any static from anyone might be good publicity for your project. BE PATRIOTIC AND RESPECTFUL. We had a few comments and discussions about no Jewish, Muslim or other grave markers. It was too much for us to deal with and stayed with crosses only. There is no mention in the government casualty lists about religion. We have a sign that if we included Iraqi war dead, that there wouldn't be enough room on the beach.

The Names

For the first few Sundays we had visitors add the name of a fallen troop to a card and most attached the name to a cross themselves. They were free to add comments and what ever information about the soldier. The cards were cut by band saw to fit the horizontal part of the cross. They could be cut with a paper cutter. They are attached with two rubber bands that we leave on the crosses, but remove the names to protect them while handling the crosses. Many felt pens and a readable list help the process. Be sure to check off a name after it has been entered. Names can be gotten from the DOD web site, Fox News and Goggle, "Iraqi war dead".)

Post Cards.

The second Sunday that we set up the display we took some pictures and made some post cards to give out to people that lingered at the site. The best deal and quickest service we found at Kinkos, a business oriented copy shop. They supplied 4-1/4" x 5-1/2" post cards for about 4 cents each by the thousands after the initial graphics work was done. We supplied the picture on CD and copy in print. We have given out about 3000 and up to 700 on one Sunday. We approach people who linger at the display and the "Wall of Fallen" (names of the troops that have died). We ask, "Have you got a post card yet?" "Or did you get a post card"? Some people ask what do they cost. We say, "Nothing, they already paid" pointing to the crosses. We do take donations to pay costs, but make it clear that we are not selling postcards. Most people take them especially if you walk on to others and don't wait for a donation or payment. We give some people 23-cent stamps if they say that they will send it to someone "who will listen."

Our post cards say, "Every Sunday the Santa Barbara Town Hall Activists and Veterans for Peace set up 470 (and growing) crosses to commemorate our fallen troops in Iraq and bring attention to the terrible price we are paying for the invasion and occupation of Iraq. These veterans are appalled at the treatment of our wounded, especially the National Guard. They are protesting the slashing of veteran's benefits and closing of veteran medical facilities. [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)." You should use different wording to sound home grown.

The Signs

The wording of the signs that explain what it is all about is important. We have left out the sign that said, " Honor the Warrior Not the War". To keep politics out of the event, we don't allow political campaign shirts and buttons. We try to carry on civilized conversations with everyone no matter what their point of view. Some just walk away.

The Wall of Fallen

It is a 20-foot long list of the dead, something like the Vietnam Wall. The names come from the govt. It takes some ingenuity to support the panels of names. We support them on 8' sections of 1" or quality 3/4" plywood.

### Candle Light

We lit the crosses one evening with a candle in a red plastic cups at every cross for an evening event where boats were lit with Christmas lights in the harbor behind our display. The bottoms were cut out of the red plastic beverage cups and votive candles in little aluminum cans were the candles. We bought candles at Smart and Final. A crew lighted them just after the sun went down with butane lighters. The best time to photograph them is when there is still enough light in the sky and on the crosses to expose well. What you see by eye is not what will photograph well. There is an exact time when the light balance is right. A tripod is absolutely necessary. What you see by eye is not what will photograph.

### Some Thoughts

Some times we are not solemn enough because we have become friends and spend many hours with the project. Our feelings about current events do bubble out.

### More Thoughts

A mini Arlington West could be considered with a Wall of Fallen, flags at half-mast and a simpler grave marker display. Maybe pictures of wounded, head stones not stuck in ground, maybe names to be attached to a large plaque (mini Vietnam Wall) by visitors