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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 26, 1982

Dear Jack:

I am pleased that we have been able to arrange a personal meeting for you February 16 with the President, and I look forward to escorting you to the Oval Office at that time.

Thank you for sending me a copy of your January 25 telegram to Secretary Watt urging him to approve the proposed design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Your views will undoubtedly bear heavily on his decision.

Telegrams necessarily carry a tone of urgency, but I was surprised at your opening statement of deep concern at Secretary Watt's "hesitancy in approving construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial."

If you review the matter, you will almost certainly conclude that the Secretary deserves praise, not criticism, for the careful process by which he has gathered information on which to base his decision.

As soon as serious objections to the proposed design arose in the veterans and service organization community, I contacted the offices of major groups to sound out opinion. Until receipt of my copy of your telegram yesterday, I was repeatedly assured by your D.C. office that the Legion strongly supports building a memorial but that you had no position for or against the proposed design. The V.F.W. has an identical position.

On the other hand, the Marine Corps League and the Non-Commissioned Officers Association sent representatives to my office strongly objecting to the proposed design. Similarly, some well known Vietnam veterans who had been prominent in the 1980 Reagan campaign came in to urge that the design be substantially changed.

So far as I know, only one veterans organization, the Vietnam Veterans of America, had contacted anyone in the Administration in favor of the design prior to your telegram. The VVA, of course, recently had a leadership delegation in Hanoi laying a wreath on the grave of Ho Chi Minh, which calls into question their status as judges of appropriate memorials.

Despite the several columns and articles pro and con on the design, there has been very little interest in the subject at the grassroots. For example, the President has received hardly any letters on the subject, but eighty percent have been negative on design.

In the process of reaching his mandated decision on this design, the Secretary has sought out for their views the major proponents and opponents of the proposal. He checked repeatedly with me to gauge the input to our Office of Public Liaison. This is an important decision, one which will affect our nation's capital long after we all are gone. We have to get it right the first time.

If you agree with me, I hope you will personally call the Secretary to clarify your telegram and make sure that no criticism of his policy to date is circulated by your office to the Legion membership.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Morton C. Blackwell".

Morton C. Blackwell  
Special Assistant to the President

Mr. Jack Flynt  
National Commander  
The American Legion  
1608 K. St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

The Honorable James G. Watt  
Secretary of the Interior  
Interior Building  
Washington, DC 20240

I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED BY YOUR HESITANCY IN APPROVING CONSTRUCTION OF  
THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL.

THE 2.7 MILLION MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, BY UNANIMOUS NATIONAL  
CONVENTION ACTION, SUPPORT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORAIL FUND. WE  
HAVE REVIEWED THE MEMORIAL DESIGN AND, BECAUSE WE SEE IT TO BE A  
DIGNIFIED AND ELOQUENT TRIBUTE TO THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF  
VIETNAM VETERANS, ARE PLEDGING \$1 MILLION TOWARD ITS CONSTRUCTION.

IT IS DISHEARTENING THAT A CONTROVERSY AND DIVISIVENESS ONCE AGAIN  
THREATEN THE CAUSE OF THE VIETNAM VETERAN. THE MEMORIAL'S CRITICS  
SAY NOTHING WHICH OVERSHADOWS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEMORIALIZING, NOW,  
THE COURAGE AND PATRIOTISM OF THOSE AMERICANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE RESPONDING TO THIS CAUSE WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED  
OUTPOURING OF FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT. I URGE YOU TO JOIN THEM  
AND ALLOW THE MEMORIAL TO BE CONSTRUCTED WITHOUT DELAY.

JACK W. FLYNT  
NATIONAL COMMANDER  
THE AMERICAN LEGION



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 19, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR ELIZABETH H. DOLE

THRU: DIANA LOZANO

FROM: MORTON BLACKWELL 

SUBJECT: STATUS OF DISPUTE OF VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

1. All of the organizations and individuals militantly opposed to the proposed design are still actively fighting it.
2. General J. Milnor Roberts of the Reserve Officers Association, who personally does not like the design, says that his organization suggests that the Administration defer approval for groundbreaking until after H. Ross Perot's poll by the Gallup organization is completed.
3. Cooper Holt of the Veterans of Foreign Wars says his organization has no current plans to enter the design controversy. They would not criticize an Administration disapproval of the current design.
4. Mylio Kraja of the American Legion said he would check on the status of the Legion's position and get back to us Wednesday morning, January 20th.
5. Jerry Dalton, former director of public affairs for the United States Air Force and now on the staff of H. Ross Perot, called to say that he and Perot had arranged a meeting between the Gallup organization and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation staff to develop a legitimate poll which could go into the field anyday now with results from Vietnam combat zone veterans in three and one-half weeks.
6. Perot has encouraged Jan Scruggs of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation and the design's opponents to have a meeting next week in an attempt to work out a compromise. If no compromise is forthcoming, Perot will give a green light to Gallup to conduct the poll.

My recommendation is that Secretary Watt be encouraged to defer final approval of the memorial design pending results of the Perot-financed Gallup poll. Gallup should do a fair job on this. If the combat veterans support the design, all effective opposition will collapse. If they oppose the design, it will be very difficult to criticize the Administration for adhering to their preference.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 29, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR ELIZABETH H. DOLE

THRU: DIANA LOZANO  
FROM: MORTON BLACKWELL *MB*  
SUBJECT: VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

It appears that we are having a break in the impasse over the memorial design. Note attached memo.

I will keep you posted regarding the success of this compromise.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1982

TO: Morton

FROM: Kathy

RE: VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

I spoke with Roy Adams of Senator Denton's staff, and he reported to me about a meeting which was held on Wednesday evening, January 27th concerning this memorial.

The meeting was chaired by Senator Warner. Senator Denton, Congressmen Bailey and Crane were present and participated also.

Ross Perot, the gentleman who was intending to fund the survey of Vietnam veterans as to their feelings about this memorial design, was there. Also, of course some staff members from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation, the proponents of the memorial, and various members of the opponents to the design were also present.

There was quite a screaming match in the beginning and everyone voiced an opinion, but finally it seems that they reached a compromise.

The compromise is as follows:

There will be a statue in front of the black wall - a soldier type, appropriate and patriotic, probably white. Thus, the black wall will serve as a back drop to this statue.

The inscriptions will be reworded in an appropriate and patriotic fashion - something like "the cause we were fighting for was a just cause."

This seemed to be acceptable to all members present.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 4, 1982

TO: Morton  
FROM: Kathy  
RE: Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Newest update on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

As reported last week, the compromise was reached between the proponents and opponents.

Today, Jan Scruggs, President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, met with Secretary James Watt and Under Secretary Bill Horn concerning action on the compromise.

The following arrangement was agreed to:

The new design compromise plan - which includes a patriotic statue of a fighting figure, a flag and a flag pole, and a rewording of the inscription to a patriotic message - will be prepared and submitted to Secretary Watt with a financial statement.

Then Secretary Watt will review and expects to approve if there is not a problem.

The Secretary will send it for final approval to the Fine Arts Commission and National Capitol Planning Commission.

The Secretary hopes to do this quickly so groundbreaking can take place as scheduled on March 1st.

Bill Horn, Under Secretary at Interior, will keep me informed of the progress and let us know if any problems come up.



MAR 22 REC'D

March 19, 1982

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Dole:

Please be our guest at the ceremonial Vietnam Veterans Memorial groundbreaking at 10:30 a.m. on March 26, 1982. This occasion signifies the end of our fund raising campaign and the beginning of construction.

We certainly hope you will join us at this historic event.

The ceremony will last approximately one hour. It will take place in the west end of Constitution Gardens near the intersection of 21st Street, N.W. and Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Sincerely,

Jan C. Scruggs  
President

JCS/bjs

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TO: Anna 3/22  
PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR RECOMMENDATION/  
COMMENTS ON THE FOLLOWING REQUEST.  
RETURN TO CHARLOTTE BY 3/23

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.

1110 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 308, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 659-2490

☒ rllc

☐ Other

Comments: I think this would  
be a good event for F.H.D. to  
attend. She did not work the  
Vietnam Day Ceremony at Arlington  
Memorial, although she was listed  
in the program. This ceremony  
was handled well, and we can  
be proud of our role in  
helping reach a resolution  
which is acceptable to almost  
everyone.

M. Blochwell

LLOYD N. UNSELL  
1101 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036  
(202) 857-4700

March 23, 1982

Archibald E. Roberts, LtCol, AUS, ret, Director  
Committee to Restore The Constitution, Inc.  
Suite 480, Savings Building  
Howes at Oak  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

Dear Sir:

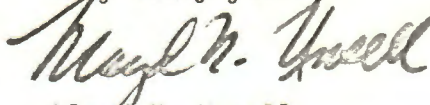
I am affronted by your arrogant, vituperative and insulting letter of February 22 addressed to Col. Don Schaet of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

How dare you sit in judgment on the patriotism credentials of the fine young men who struggled against the likes of you to build this memorial - young men who spilled blood in Vietnam, who lost limbs there, who carried their shrapnel home, and whose courage and sacrifice was in the finest tradition of this great land.

If you do not like the design of the Memorial, sir, that is your right - but to attempt to suggest that it is a "subversion of the American spirit" is a slur on the finest, most patriotic group of young Americans that it has been my good fortune to know.

Now, with respect to your letter addressed to me suggesting that I "withdraw" my support for the Memorial. You can go to hell, sir.

Very truly yours,

  
Lloyd N. Unsell

cc: John R. Rarick  
Bruce Alger  
Hon. James G. Watt  
Col. D. W. Schaet  
Hon. Morton C. Blackwell





(26 MARCH

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Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Ret.\*  
Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

\*Served in Vietnam

Affiliations noted for  
purposes of identification only.

Dear Friend:

Please be our guest at the ceremonial Vietnam Veterans Memorial groundbreaking at 10:30 a.m. on March 26, 1982. This occasion signifies the end of our fund raising campaign and the beginning of construction.

We certainly hope you will join us at this historic event.

The ceremony will last approximately one hour. It will take place in the west end of Constitution Gardens near the intersection of 21st Street, N.W. and Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Sincerely,

Jan C. Scruggs  
President

JCS/caj

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House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
202/225-5711

DAVID J. ALLEN  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

SUITE 101  
1430 SOUTH NEW WALKER ROAD  
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS 60005  
312/304-6789

November 20, 1981

The Honorable James G. Watt  
The Secretary of Interior  
Department of Interior  
C Street  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Some time ago, we all thought that we had finally taken action that would honor those who served in the Vietnam war. No matter what our individual attitudes toward that conflict may have been, we agreed that those who rendered faithful service to this nation during that trying time should be honored and recognized for their selfless, patriotic actions. Accordingly, we passed Public Law 96-297, which is attached at "A". Therein, we said that

"the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund...is authorized to establish a memorial on public grounds...in honor and recognition of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war."

In their application of this Congressional license, however, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) seems to have somewhat twisted things. In the design competition booklet that was distributed to all registered competitors before any designs had been submitted, the ground rules of the competition were laid out. Under a section of that booklet entitled "The Purpose and Philosophy of the Memorial," the following paragraph (attached at "B") appears on page 5:

The purpose of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is to recognize and honor those who served and died. It will provide a symbol of acknowledgement of the courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty of those who were among the nation's finest youth. Whether they served because of their belief in the war policy, their belief in the obligation to answer the call of their country, or their simple acquiescence in a course of events beyond their control, their service was no less honorable than that rendered by Americans in any previous war. Those who served and died embodied values and ideals prized by this nation since its inception. The failure of the nation to honor them only extends the tragedy of our involvement in Vietnam." (Emphasis added.)



Secretary Watt

Page Two

The subjects and objects of all the sentences in the above paragraph are "those who served and died", and "they", "them", and "those" pronouns which can only mean "those who served and died" - no other definition is possible. In other words, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund sought and selected a design that would be built as a memorial to the dead.

This is confirmed by the text of a letter sent by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to the Marine Corps League on 18 September 1981 (attached at "C"). On page of 2 of that letter appears the following:

"No matter how it met the foregoing criteria, the memorial was to express its purpose, which we set forth in the competition rules as follows:"

and then follows the above-quoted paragraph. While it is true that the 57,000 who died are among those who are the proposed subjects of this memorial, there are also 2.7 million others who returned to this country after faithful service in Vietnam who we seek to honor.

How did such an obvious variation on the intentions of Congress occur? Some light may be shed on that question by the last two lines of an editorial written by Jan Scruggs, now President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, which was published in the Washington Post on 25 May 1977 (attached at "D"):

"No efforts can provide compensation, of course, to the Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. For them, perhaps, a national monument is in order, to remind an ungrateful nation of what it has done to its sons."

The result of the design competition for a memorial to the dead is a black wall sunk ten feet below ground on which the names of the dead will be carved. The widow of a Marine who died in Vietnam has compared it to the oven mouths at Dachau, and feels it is a grisly reminder of something ugly and shameful in America's past. A Navy Captain who was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for eight years feels that it will be a constant reminder to him of the daily litany he heard from his guards that described him as the "blackest of all criminals." Clearly, this is not what Congress intended when it authorized a memorial "in honor and recognition of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war." We are proud of their selfless sacrifice for America, and we must have a memorial that clearly shows that.

Any memorial to be constructed will be for all eternity. It will become part of the Capital's visage. Delaying implementation of any design and plan for several weeks or even several months is inconsequential. Any memorial built will share the same hallowed grounds as the monument to the great American emancipator Abraham Lincoln. It is essential that any memorial constructed there be non-controversial, fitting and proper. It is important not to rush into a decision on any particular design.



Secretary Watt  
Page Three

As Secretary of the Interior you have authority over and responsibility for any public lands on which a memorial will be built. Indeed these lands can be considered a national trust.

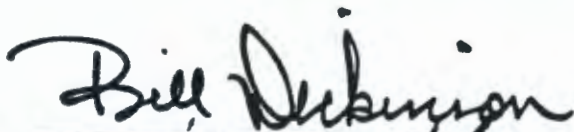
It is our understanding that the proposed design has been changed several times over the last several weeks, indeed, it is changing even now. We urge you to query VVMF as to its plans for additional modifications. Further, in light of the evidence presented herein, the undersigned urge you to thoroughly examine the proposed design and plans for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Sincerely,



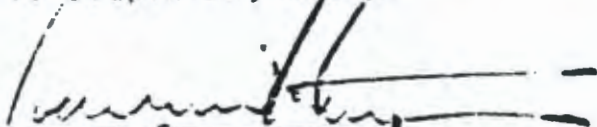
Philip M. Crane, M.C.

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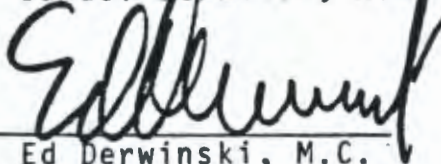
Bill Dickinson, M.C.

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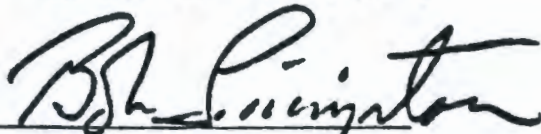
Samuel Stratton, M.C.

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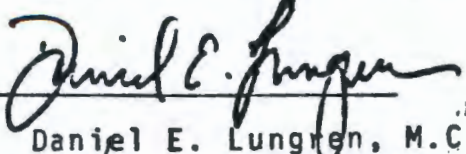
Ed Derwinski, M.C.

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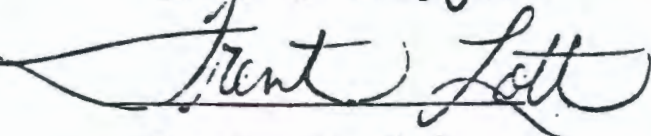
Robert Livingston, M.C.

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Daniel E. Lungren, M.C.

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Trent Lott, M.C.

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(A)

# Ninety-sixth Congress of the United States of America

## AT THE SECOND SESSION

Began and held at the City of Washington on Thursday, the third day of January,  
one thousand nine hundred and eighty

### Joint Resolution

To authorize the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., to establish a memorial.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the District of Columbia, is authorized to establish a memorial on public grounds in West Potomac Park in the District of Columbia, in honor and recognition of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War.*

Sec. 2. (a) The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., is authorized and directed to select with the approval of the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission a suitable site of approximately two acres in size located in the area of West Potomac Park known as Constitution Gardens in the District of Columbia. *Provided*, That if subsurface soil conditions prevent the engineering of a feasible foundation system for the memorial in a location in that area, then the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., is authorized and directed to select a suitable site of approximately two acres in size located in an area of West Potomac Park north of Independence Avenue other than Constitution Gardens.

(b) The design and plans for such memorial shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Capital Planning Commission. *Provided*, That if the Secretary of the Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts, or the National Capital Planning Commission fails to report his or its approval of or specific objection to such design and plans within ninety days of their submission, his or its approval shall be deemed to be given.

(c) Neither the United States nor the District of Columbia shall be put to any expense in the establishment of the memorial.

Sec. 3 The authority conferred pursuant to this resolution shall lapse unless (1) the establishment of such memorial is commenced within five years from the date of enactment of this resolution, and (2) prior to groundbreaking for actual construction on the site, funds are certified available in an amount sufficient, in the judgment of the Secretary of the Interior based upon the approved design and plans for the memorial, to insure completion of the memorial.

Sec. 4 The maintenance and care of the memorial established under the provisions of this resolution shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior.

*Thomas P. Downing*

Speaker of the House of Representatives

*Wm. French Smith*

President of the Senate *for Signature*

APPROVED

JUL -1 1980

*Jimmy Carter*



(B)

tween ally and enemy, and with strict rules of engagement — subjected the Vietnam soldier to unimaginable pressures. Because of inequities in the draft system, the brunt of dangerous service fell upon the young, often the socially and economically disadvantaged. While experiences in combat areas were brutal enough in themselves, their adverse effects were multiplied by the maltreatment received by the veterans upon their return home.

After previous wars, including the Civil War, the nation honored its veterans. For the Vietnam veterans, however, continuing controversy over the war allowed for little psychological support from American society. The hostility of both those who deplored the war and those angered by its frustrating extension was directed against those who fought it: the veterans. To say that there were no welcoming parades is more than an understatement. A telling incident is the story of a Vietnam amputee being taunted with the remark that "it served him right". The result, for Vietnam veterans, is a void. The time taken from their lives, their wounds, and the honorable service they rendered have received little or no acknowledgment from American society.

The purpose of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is to recognize and honor those who served and died. It will provide a symbol of acknowledgement of the courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty of those who were among the nation's finest youth. Whether they served because of their belief in the war policy, their belief in the obligation to answer the call of their country, or their simple acquiescence in a course of events beyond their control, their service was no less honorable than that rendered by Americans in any previous war. Those who served and died embodied values and ideals prized by this nation since its inception. The failure of the nation to honor them only extends the national tragedy of our involvement in Vietnam.

Yet hope can be born from tragedy. As our nation

finds its way in rising above recrimination, as it acknowledges the veterans of Vietnam, and as it gains the courage to mourn those who were lost, it can look to the future with a renewed sense of purpose. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial will stand as a symbol of our nation's appreciation for the sacrifices and loss that resulted from Vietnam. It will express a nation's respect and gratitude.

The memorial will make no political statement regarding the war or its conduct. It will transcend those issues. The hope is that the creation of the memorial will begin a healing process, a reconciliation of the grievous divisions wrought by the war. Through the memorial both supporters and opponents of the war may find a common ground for recognizing the sacrifice, heroism, and loyalty which were also a part of the Vietnam experience. Through such a recognition the nation will resolve its history fully. Then the Vietnam Veterans Memorial may also become a symbol of national unity, a focal point for remembering the war's dead, the veterans, and the lessons learned through a tragic experience.

The leadership of this country has given the Vietnam Veterans Memorial effort overwhelming endorsement. The original resolution proposing the site was "co-sponsored" by all 100 members of the U.S. Senate and 196 members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The sponsors represented all elements of the nation's political spectrum. It included those who represented the most bitter divisions.

The site for the memorial was chosen both for its prominence and for its proximity to the Lincoln Memorial, itself a symbol of reconciliation after the Civil War. The memorial is being financed by public contributions rather than governmental appropriations. This will create an opportunity for individual involvement and for a national expression of sentiment.





**National Headquarters • 933 North Kenmore Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22201 • (703) 524-1137**

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**Li Gen John A. Lajeune  
Founder**

**September 10, 1981**

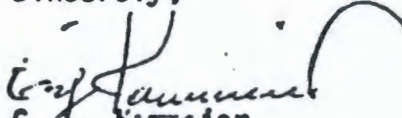
**Bob Doubek  
Secretary and Project Director  
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.  
1110 Vermont Avenue, NW - Suite 308  
Washington, D. C. 20005**

**Dear Bob,**

This is to express my personal concern, along with that of many, many other members of the Marine Corps League regarding the selected design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to be erected in Washington, D. C. While I personally, and our organization generally, have been quite supportive of the concept, the ultimate selection appears to be quite controversial. Neither I nor any of our members who have discussed this matter profess to be qualified from an architectural standpoint to praise or criticize the final selection, but, there appears to be a general consensus that nothing in the design represents the purpose or the commitment of those who served and survived the Vietnam experience. The particular common sense criticism is based on the fact that none volunteered to serve their country in Vietnam for the express purpose of dying or to ultimately have their name engraved on a tombstone; as represented by the current design of the memorial. Most readily agreed, however, that duty, honor and country were main motivating factors toward their service and which is best represented by the American flag. From an architectural viewpoint, artistic justification for resistance to change of the selection to incorporate the flag or any other modification, has been expressed as "in a monument receding in a town of monuments rising" the inclusion of a patriotic symbol, or any other modification, would detract from the overall design concept.

For the sake of the many non-artists who have served their country under the standard American symbol of duty, honor and country, in every war since our nation was founded, as represented by our flag; I encourage your committee to make every effort to include the flag in a suggested modification to the current design, or to even scrap the current design altogether and reopen the bidding for a selection by a committee comprised of at least several members who have actually served in Vietnam.

**Sincerely,**

  
**C. F. Kammeier  
Executive Director**

**"ONCE A MARINE. ALWAYS A MARINE"**





September 24, 1981

FRS  
French, CPA  
Adams Jr., Esq.  
Rheeler III, Esq.  
Scruggs  
Mild. Schaefer, USMC Ret.

**Dear Cy:**

I have received your letter of September 10, 1981 expressing your concern with the design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Your letter, while a brief one, raises many issues that are necessarily involved in the creation of any memorial, i.e., in providing a symbol of a feeling or message. I wish to give you my thoughts on these issues, so that you may change your opinion about the design or, if not, at least understand our thinking.

First, however, I wish to note that there have been many inaccuracies about the memorial published in the press recently. Try as we might, through letters to the editor, press releases, and other means, we have not been totally successful in setting the record straight. The problem is the regrettable habit of many members of the press not to verify independently their information with us before publishing.

The most persistent of these inaccuracies is that the completed memorial allegedly will have no mention of "Vietnam" or the "Vietnam War." I can assure you, however, that it will be appropriately identified for what it is, a memorial to honor and recognize the veterans of Vietnam.

Other members of the fourth estate have attempted to read political messages into the design, usually against U.S. policy in Vietnam, primarily because the memorial is black. In doing so, they appear not to know that many of this nation's proudest monuments to its fighting men, including the Iwo Jima Memorial and the Seabees Memorial in Washington, are of the identical material planned for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, i.e., black granite. Indeed, this material could even be described as the standard, since the South Boston Vietnam Memorial, which was dedicated on September 13th, is also of black granite. I can assure you here as well, that the material for the walls of the memorial was chosen solely for its artistic effect, rather than to make an detrimental statement about the war effort or the veterans.

attempted justification

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.**

111, 00 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 308, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 659-2490

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As I understand it, your main concern is that nothing in the design represents the purpose and commitment of the veterans and that, moreover, the design is nothing but a tombstone for those who died. In this regard, I wish to note that the genesis of our idea for the design of the memorial came from the South East Asia Memorial at West Point. There the 1960s classes decided to landscape a small peninsula jutting into a lake and dedicate it as a park to the memory of their comrades who died, rather than to erect a statue or edifice. We adopted the idea of a landscaped solution because we believed that, after the turmoil surrounding the war, which more than anything obscured the sacrifices made by the veterans, what was needed was a place, where people could come and without distraction reflect upon and pay homage to those who were most affected by the war: the veterans. With this idea in mind, we initially focused our efforts on finding a prominent site with sufficient space for the type of memorial we had in mind. As you know, we were successful in obtaining Congressional authorization for a two acre site in Constitution Gardens. To overcome the objection of the National Park Service that the design must be decided before the site, we noted that we would design a memorial that would harmonize and be consistent with the surroundings of Constitution Gardens.

When we developed the materials for our design competition, we set forth criteria that the memorial design should be reflective and contemplative in character and in harmony with its site, an integral part of Constitution Gardens. Furthermore, the design was to provide for the inscription of the name of each man and woman who died. While the memorial is to honor all veterans, the names will provide a special recognition for those who died and, in effect, preserve forever the most significant symbol of a man himself, his name. No matter how it met the foregoing criteria, the memorial was to express its purpose, which we set forth in the competition rules as follows:

The purpose of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is to recognize and honor those who served and died. It will provide a symbol of acknowledgement of the courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty of those who were among the nation's finest youth. Whether they served because of their belief in the war policy, their belief in the obligation to answer the call of their country, or their simple acquiescence in a course of events beyond their control, their service was no less honorable than that rendered by Americans in any previous war. Those who served and died embodied values and ideals prized by this nation since its inception. The failure of the nation to honor them only extends the national tragedy of our involvement in Vietnam.

One thing that we did not do in the competition program was attempt to prescribe any particular type of artistic medium or style, such as figurative or abstract sculpture. Our role was to develop a method by which the design could be chosen rather to decide by ourselves, except for the basic criteria, what the design should be.



September 24, 1981

Our choice of the jury was probably the most difficult decision that we have made as an organization. We considered various alternatives, including having one or more Vietnam veterans per se on it, but in the end decided upon a jury composed entirely of experienced professionals. The purpose of the memorial is not to literally depict the experience and motivation of Vietnam veterans, but to express America's honor and recognition of them. We realized that the important skill of a juror was not so much having an experience or feeling but the ability to interpret how well a particular design expressed that experience or feeling.

There were other reasons for our decision on the jury composition. To evaluate the cost feasibility, buildability, and likelihood of Federal approval, etc., of the vast number of design entries, a juror would need a lot of maturity as well as much experience with taking projects from concept to reality. A factor militating against a Vietnam veteran, Gold Star Mother, military person, etc., being on the jury was that because of the other jury members' empathy for such a person, they might be swayed too greatly by that person's opinion. As we all know, everyone who was in Vietnam had a different experience of it, and the memorial might then become an expression of the experience of one man or a small group. Again, the purpose of the memorial is not to reflect any one experience but rather the honor and recognition of American society.

Although the chosen jurors were too old to have actually served in Vietnam, we carefully interviewed each one to insure that they were supportive of Vietnam veterans and sensitive to the country's need to provide an appropriate symbol of recognition. Some of the jurors were combat veterans, one of World War I. We required them to read an extensive list of books regarding the Vietnam experience, including Jim Webb's Fields of Fire and Phil Caputo's A Rumor of War.

The jury's choice of the winning design received the unanimous acceptance of our board, staff and volunteer design advisors, and all but one of us served in Vietnam. The strongest supporters were two of the combat veterans. Jan Scruggs, as you know, is the president and founder of the VVMF, and John Woods is a permanently disabled veteran and a structural engineer design professional. If we had had any Vietnam veteran on the jury, it would have been Jan.

The memorial is not just the structure, but is the entire park area surrounding it. It meets the criteria of being a reflective and contemplative place in harmony with its surroundings. It makes a powerful statement that this society pays tribute to Vietnam veterans.

How? ↗



While it does not, as you note, have any literal depiction of the purpose and motivation of those who served, the thoughtful visitor will contemplate those traits. One cannot see 57,692 names etched in 400 feet of granite without doing so. Within the parameters of the design a visitor is free to interpret its symbolism in his own way. Some have seen in the walls the chevron of the PFC, the one who bore the brunt of fighting in the war; others have seen a pair of joined hands, in which our country is finally uniting after a decisive period or a pair of out stretched arms embracing and reaching out to Vietnam veterans.

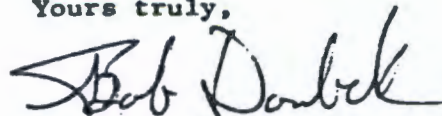
America does not build memorials on its national Mall to any but its best, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is taking its place literally in the shadow of the Washington Monument. That monument, while having no literal expression of the courage, honesty, and leadership of George Washington, more than anything else symbolizes our country's reverence of him.

Regarding any changes to the chosen design, the VVMF would be very reluctant to make any because of our belief that its strength and power derive from its very simplicity. We are now working with the designer to iron out all the details, such as the exact placement of the names and the location and content of the identifying inscription.

Cy, I've rambled for quite a bit, but I hope that I've given you some insight into the background philosophy for the memorial and why we think the design is very appropriate. The main point I would like to leave you with is that, again, the purpose of the memorial is not necessary to depict the purpose and motivation of the veterans but rather to express American society's honor and recognition of them. Other forms of expression, such as Jim Webb's novel, are the more appropriate way to express what the veterans experienced and how they were motivated. No memorial, whatever its design, could by itself set the record straight regarding the way Vietnam veterans have been maligned. The memorial as designed, however, will be a powerful symbol of America's honor and recognition, and a significant component of bringing Vietnam veterans home.

We would be happy to discuss the design in person with you or any members of the League. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Yours truly,



Robert W. Doubek  
Project Director

RWD/crc



# Forgotten Veterans of 'That Peculiar War'

Just as the Vietnam war was unique in the way that it was waged—and lost—so that conflict has subjected our youngest-ever corps of war veterans to pressures unparalleled in American military history. The victory parades and hero status awarded to previous generations of military returnees were simply not present. The national turmoil surrounding the war made one's status as a Vietnam veteran a dubious distinction at best.

Probably no aspect of the war has been more exploited, misunderstood and officially neglected

Mr. Scruggs is a disabled veteran of the Vietnam war.

than the readjustment problems of Vietnam returnees. In the past two years the psychological and academic communities have finally started taking an interest in the effects of having participated in that conflict. We are seeing research indicating that serious and prolonged adjustment problems exist for many Vietnam veterans.

My personal interest in this topic is rooted in my own experience. When I was a naive teenager, a profound sense of duty compelled me to serve my country during time of war. After my tour, the wounds and medals I received as an infantryman in Vietnam became slowly transformed into reminders of my part in a cruel and meaningless conflict. My naive acceptance of America as a great and noble land gave way to more critical thinking as my conventional beliefs, attitudes and values were shaken by the war. I sometimes felt a deep bitterness toward this country as I reflected back to a quiet Sunday in 1970, when two very special friends of mine, a young black and a Jew, were drafted, suddenly lay dismembered and motionless in the dirt of Vietnam.

During graduate training in counseling psychology at American University, I initiated a long and expensive social psychological investigation of the war's effects upon college veterans. A questionnaire was designed to test the major hypotheses advanced by the scant literature available on this neglected topic. A prominent psychology professor, Dr. Allan Berman, provided excellent professional guidance. Questionnaires were given to 600 Vietnam veterans at local universities. Our 233 replies yielded some important findings about the psychological aftermath of that peculiar war.

The research found that men who served in units with a casualty rate of more than 25 per cent were statistically higher in political alienation. These veterans were also 11 times more likely to report dreaming of Vietnam combat than those who served in units with no casualties. Many evidenced low self-esteem. Only half of the sample did not feel that Vietnam duty had caused them psychological problems. Only one of the black combat veterans did not feel that Vietnam duty had hurt him psychologically. Some veterans who had psychological problems from the war indicated a reluctance to seek help from the Veterans Administration. Combat veterans had a 20 per cent rate of separations and divorce. The dry statistics of the social sciences revealed a sad legacy remaining from a war that this country is trying to forget. In my present futile search for federal employ-



By Stuart Leads for The Washington Post

ment, I recently spoke with a civil-service counselor who has talked with several young men who refuse their five-point preferences rather than bear the stigma of being known as Vietnam veterans. One of the big cat and longest running jokes in this town is the special 10-point preference for disabled Vietnam veterans. Ronald Drach, employment director for the Disabled American Veterans and himself an amputee from Vietnam combat, states that it is generally not enforced and that cases exist where it has been intentionally circumvented by federal agencies. Most of the federal employees who have tried to help me and other disabled Vietnam veterans gain employment are also frustrated about this situation. The Department of Labor, which has been given the task of enforcing affirmative-action programs for hiring Vietnam-era veterans, sets a miserable example for private industry. Vietnam-era veterans constitute less than 1 per cent of the department's total work force, one of the lowest for any major federal agency.

March unemployment statistics revealed that the unemployment rate for the youngest age group of Vietnam-era veterans has increased one percentage point, to 17.2 per cent. However, the unemployment rate for the same age group of male non-veterans has decreased one point to 10.4 per cent.

My findings are really not surprising. Several years back some leading psychiatrists, including Dr. Peter Bourne and Yale's Dr. Robert J. Lifton, warned that the Vietnam conflict would have serious, delayed consequences for many who served there. The very nature of this odd war—the lack of psychological justification for the soldier engaged in it, and society's indifference upon his return—perhaps made this inevitable.

It is, of course, not recent news that war has adverse effects on the human psyche. We have always known that. What is new, however, is that this country has never before given veterans the shoddy treatment that has been bestowed upon those who served in Vietnam. Many who volunteered or allowed themselves to be drafted did so with vague assurances of future educational benefits and employment. They returned to find that the GI Bill was inadequate and that many jobs were filled by those who had purposely avoided their military obligation.

The new administration has taken some measures to provide assistance, however belatedly, to those who became the victims of this nation's foreign-policy mistakes. It is not yet clear how far President Carter is willing to go to alleviate the appalling unemployment rate for veterans. He has, however, demonstrated his wisdom in the appointment of an energetic Vietnam returnee, Max Cleland, to the new chief of the Veterans Administration. Some healthy changes are now taking place to make the VA's services more in keeping with the needs of all veterans. Cleland wants to reverse his agency's poor retention rate for physicians. He wants to expand the drug- and alcohol-treatment facilities. Furthermore, he recognizes the need for the Veterans Administration to provide readjustment counseling, the lack of which has exacerbated the problems of many Vietnam veterans.

My research will soon be reviewed by the Senate and House committees on veterans' affairs. If nothing comes of that, the effort will be buried away in some academic journal. But my findings, as well as those of other researchers, highlight some very real problems that will not go away, for all the haste with which this country may seek to sweep a shameful war under the rug.

There is a major issue here for this country to resolve, for the indifference and lack of compassion that the veterans have received is, to a large degree, a reflection of our lack of a national reconciliation after Vietnam. The fundamental challenge should now be to meet the very real needs of this group as a major step toward America's final recovery from that war. The power—and the responsibility—to make good on the national obligation to Vietnam-era veterans ultimately rests with the President and the Congress. It is an obligation of compensation, of course, to the Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. For them, perhaps, a national monument is in order to remind an ungrateful nation of what it has done to its sons.



# Epitaph for Vietnam

## A Design to Honor the Dead

By Henry Allen

For the dead whom few wanted to remember after a war few could forget, a woman who was 4 years old when the first bodies came home has designed a national memorial to be built on the Mall.

Maya Ying Lin, who is 21 and a Yale undergraduate architecture student, was picked out of 1,420 entrants as winner of a competition sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

"I liked my idea but I knew it was never going to be chosen — it was too different, too strange," said Lin, whose parents emigrated from China in 1948 and teach at Ohio University.

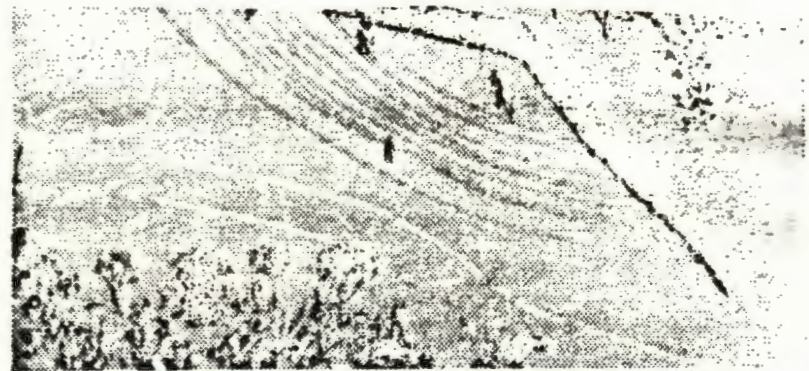
The memorial design shows two polished black granite walls, each 200 feet long. They meet to form an oblique triangle. Inside the triangle the ground falls away at a five-degree slope until it reaches the apex. There, the walls will be 10 feet high. They will be inscribed with the names of the 57,692 Americans killed in Vietnam between 1963 and 1973. The names, in letters 3/4 of an inch high, will be listed in chronological order of death.

Said Lin: "These names, seemingly infinite in number, convey the sense of overwhelming numbers, while unifying those individuals into a whole. For this memorial is not meant as a memorial to the individual, but rather as a me-

See MEMORIAL, F3, Col. 1



Jan Scruggs, left, & Maya Ying Lin; by James M. Thresher



A model of the design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; by James M. Thresher

## Monument to the Forgotten

**MEMORIAL, From F1**  
monial to the men and women who died during the war, a whole.

Her design does not mention the war itself, or the Republic of South Vietnam; only the names of the dead.

Washington architect Paul D. Spreiregen, who served as a professional adviser to the memorial fund, quoted one of the jurors as saying: "In a city of white memorials rising, this will be a dark memorial receding." He said the jury, composed of two architects, two landscape architects, three sculptors and an architectural editor, had decided on a minimalist design because "people can bring to it whatever they want."

Said Lin: "The design sort of popped into my head. I wanted some sort of journey into the earth."

She submitted it as part of course work in funerary architecture at Yale. Both she and her professor entered the contest. The professor gave her a B in the course. She won the \$20,000 first prize.

Asked for her memories of the war, she said: "It didn't enter my world. I remember there were riots, and my parents would never let me out of the house when there were riots. Later on, the realization of the youth of the people involved came to me — that they'd been killed in the war or while protesting."

Asked about the fact that neither the war nor the country it was fought in are mentioned in the design, Robert Doubek, project director, said: "Does Washington's name appear on the Washington monument? You would have to be very oblivious to reality to not know where they died."

Doubek said that "one of the [submitted] designs had a big peace sign on top of it, but there were very few

With 1,420 entries, requiring an estimated 80 man-years of work, this was the biggest design competition in the history of this country, Doubek said. "I was out at the warehouse in Capitol Heights on March 31, the deadline. We got 150 entries between 5 p.m. and midnight. With five minutes to go, there was one woman who had her design laid out in the parking lot, filling in the return address."

The memorial is the brainchild of a Vietnam veteran named Jan Scruggs. At the prize announcement, he said: "In 1970 I was a teen-ager with an Army infantry company. By the end of my tour, half my company had been killed or wounded. In 1976 I presented testimony to Congress about the Vietnam veterans — their lowered self-esteem, marital difficulties and other problems. In 1979 I had the idea for the memorial, for something the government couldn't adequately provide — recognition. It's not a memorial to honor the war but the sacrifice of the Vietnam veterans."

Scruggs went to Sen. Charles Mathias (R-Md.), who introduced a bill to give the memorial a site. Sen. John Warner (R-Va.) helped raise seed money for a national fund-raising campaign by holding a fund-raising breakfast at his home.

So far, the fund has raised \$1.1 million and has set Veterans Day (Nov. 11) 1982 as the date they hope to unveil the memorial, which will be in the Constitution Gardens section of the Mall, near the Lincoln Memorial.

The second-place winner, awarded \$10,000, was a team headed by architect Marvin Krosinsky, of Island Park N.Y., and the third prize of \$5,000 was won by an Alexandria team headed by landscape architect Joseph F. Brown. All of the entries will be on display on May 9 at Hangar No. 3 at



## STATEMENT OF WINNING DESIGNER, MAYA YING LIN

Walking through this park--the memorial appears as a rift in the earth -- a long, polished black stone wall, emerging from and receding into the earth. Approaching the memorial, the ground slopes gently downward and the low walls emerging on either side, growing out of the earth, extend and converge at a point below and ahead. Walking into the grassy site contained by the walls of the memorial we can barely make out the carved names upon the memorial walls. These names, seemingly infinite in number, convey the sense of overwhelming numbers, while unifying those individuals into a whole. For this memorial is meant not as a monument to the individual, but rather as a memorial to the men and women who died during the war as a whole.

The memorial is composed not as an unchanging monument, but as a moving composition, to be understood as we move into and out of it; the passage itself is gradual, the descent to the origin slow, but it is at the origin that the meaning of this memorial is to be fully understood. At the intersection of these walls, on the right side, at the wall's top, is carved the date of the first death. It is followed by the names of those who have died in the war, in chronological order. These names continue on this wall, appearing to recede into the earth at the wall's end. The names resume on the left wall, as the wall emerges from the earth, back to the origin, where the date of the last death is carved, at the bottom of this wall. Thus the war's beginning and end meet; the war is 'complete', coming full circle, yet broken by the earth that bounds the angle's open side, and contained within the earth itself. As we turn to leave, we see these walls stretching into the distance, directing us to the Washington Monument, to the left, and the Lincoln Memorial, to the right, thus bringing the Vietnam memorial into historical context. We the living are brought to a concrete realization of these deaths.

Brought to a sharp awareness of such a loss, it is up to each individual to resolve or come to terms with this loss. For death is in the end a personal and private matter and the area contained within this memorial is a quiet place, meant for personal reflection and private reckoning. The thick granite walls, each 200 feet long and 10 feet below the ground at their lowest point (gradually ascending toward ground level) effectively act as a sound barrier, yet are of such a height and length so as not to appear threatening or enclosing. The actual area is wide and shallow, allowing for a sense of privacy, and the sunlight from the memorial's southern exposure along with the grassy park surrounding and within its wall, contribute to the serenity of the area. Thus this memorial is for those who have died, and for us to remember them.

The memorial's origin is located approximately at the center of this site; its legs each extending 200 feet toward the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The walls, contained on one side by the earth, are 10 feet below the ground at their point of origin, gradually lessening in height, until they finally recede totally into the earth at their ends. The walls are to be made of hard, polished black granite, with the names to be carved in a simple Trajan letter, 3/4 " high, allowing nine inches in length for each name. The memorial's construction involves recontouring the area within the wall's boundaries so as to provide for an easily accessible descent, but as much of the site as possible should be left untouched (including trees). The area should remain a park for all to enjoy.

--Maya Ying Lin



HENRY J. HYDE  
8TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1203 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-4361

## Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

December 30, 1981

Dear Republican Colleague:

I hate to intrude on your holiday respite, but a situation has arisen that requires immediate attention.

On March 1st -- two months from now -- ground will be broken on the Washington Mall to construct an alleged memorial to the Vietnam Veterans that, to my mind, is more of an insult than a monument.

Please study the enclosed artist's rendition of this proposed monument, which my office obtained from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

What do you make of it?

In an article appearing May 7, 1981 in the WASHINGTON POST, the following appears:

"Washington architect Paul D. Spreiegren, who served as a professional adviser to the memorial fund, quoted one of the jurors as saying: 'In a city of white memorials rising, this will be a dark memorial receding.' He said the jury, composed of two architects, two landscape architects, three sculptors and an architectural editor, had decided on a minimalist design because 'people can bring to it whatever they want.'"

How does a "dark memorial receding" honor the memory of those Americans "who died by serving our Country in Vietnam, the memory of those who were wounded and the memory of those who served"? These foregoing criteria were the instructions given the selection jury by the VVMF. Moreover, in 1980 when Congress authorized the use of public land for this memorial, the resolution provided that it should "honor and recognize the men and women of the Armed Forces ... who served in the Vietnam war." This underground black memorial lists only the names of the dead. No mention or consideration is given the rest who served. This design then, violates the provisions of the Congressional resolution.

Another guideline was to avoid having "political or military content." It seems to me, in the words of Vietnam veteran and author James H. Webb, Jr. that this design is not a memorial but a mockery to Vietnam service, "... a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrators."



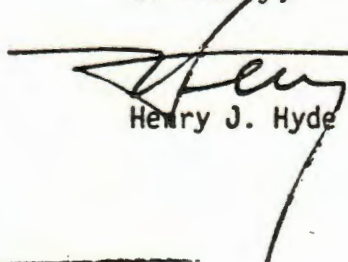
Please read Mr. Webb's article from the WALL STREET JOURNAL (enclosed) as well as Pat Buchanan's recent CHICAGO TRIBUNE column. Most important -- recall the inspiring memorials that honor our service men and women everywhere, and then look at this proposed memorial that has shame, not honor and pride as its essential message. The "Black Hole of Calcutta" needs no recreation on the Washington Mall, no matter how many architects think it is artistic.

If you agree with me that Secretary of Interior James Watt must not execute documents granting necessary permission to break National Park Service ground, and that a new memorial selection jury be formed composed of persons more interested in honoring our Vietnam Veterans, rather than using our war dead to perpetuate a guilt trip on America, please call my Washington office (202-225-4561) and tell my staff you have authorized your signature on the enclosed letter to the President and Secretary Watt.

Time is of the essence!

Hope you and your family have enjoyed the best holiday season ever!

Cordially,



Henry J. Hyde

HJH:fw  
Enclosures



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 30, 1981

Honorable Ronald Reagan  
President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned, respectfully urge you to request that Secretary of Interior James Watt withhold his signature from any documents that provide necessary permission to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, or its designees, to break ground to construct the so-called Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The enclosed article by James H. Webb, Jr. fully expresses our view that the design of this memorial conveys more shame than honor.

This proposed construction has been aptly described by a member of the design selection jury: "In a city of white memorials rising, this will be a dark memorial receding."

We feel this design makes a political statement of shame and dishonor, rather than an expression of our national pride at the courage, patriotism and nobility of all who served.

A new jury ought to be appointed, less intent on perpetuating national humiliation no matter how artistically expressed.

We who voted for enabling legislation to accomplish a Vietnam Veterans Memorial feel betrayed by the ultimate design selected. We share the view that this alleged memorial is "a black ditch that does not recognize or honor those who served" and fervently hope you and Secretary Watt will intercede to prevent this depressing and ~~undignifying~~ *undignifying* memorial from representing our Nation's public statement about men and women who deserve far better from us.

Sincerely,

*Henry J. Hyde*

Honorable James G. Watt  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to request that you withhold your final review and approval of the design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

We urge a thorough examination of the design to determine whether, in fact, it meets the Congressional mandate stating that Congress's intention in donating the land on which the memorial will be built was to provide a site for a memorial that will be, as stated in the legislation, ". . . in honor and recognition of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war."

Many Vietnam era veterans object strongly to the memorial as now conceived. We believe that no memorial should be built that is offensive to those who served in Vietnam. Private efforts are now underway to ascertain in an objective way the views of the veterans themselves, and no final decision should be made at least until that process is complete. We attach for your review a copy of an article, written by Mr. James Webb, that appeared in The Wall Street Journal on December 18, 1981, and that we believe eloquently summarizes the objections many veterans make to this design.

The fitting location of this memorial, on our National mall situated among several of our country's most revered monuments, demands that we ensure that the memorial will adequately convey to future generations our Nation's deep sense of gratitude and appreciation to all those veterans who honorably served their country during a difficult time.

We look forward to working with you and all other parties involved in this effort to provide a suitable tribute to our Vietnam veterans.

(SIGNED BY SENATORS SUMMS, HELMS, EAST, DENTON,  
MORE TO COME)



*Martin Blackwell*

The White House  
Washington

1982 MAR 4 PM 5 07

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PMS WHITEHOUSE DC

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PMS HONORABLE RONALD REAGAN

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON DC 20500

THE AMERICAN LEGION SUPPORTS THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND AS YOU ARE AWARE THIS IS A NONPROFIT CORPORATION FOUNDED IN 1979 WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE WAS TO ERECT A MEMORIAL TO THE VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR THE MEMORIAL WAS AUTHORIZED BY A JOINT RESOLUTION OF

CONGRESS CO-SPONSORED BY 100 U.S. SENATORS AND 196 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT OF BOTH BODIES ON JULY 1, 1980 THIS RESOLUTION WAS SIGNED INTO PUBLIC LAW AT THE WHITE HOUSE THAT SAME MONTH THE CURRENT DESIGN IS THE RESULT OF THE LARGEST DESIGN COMPETITION IN UNITED STATES HISTORY

CONDUCTED IN THE FALL OF 1980 AND THE SPRING OF 1981 A TOTAL OF 1421 ENTRIES RESULTED IN THE SELECTION OF THE MEMORIAL AND REVIEWED BY A PANEL OF 8 VIETNAM VETERANS SHORTLY AFTER THE DESIGN WAS SELECTED MANY MAJOR CORPORATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES BEGAN SEEKING MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUILD THE MEMORIAL SINCE ALL MONIES HAD TO COME FROM PRIVATE SOURCES PER THE PUBLIC LAW THE AMERICAN LEGION UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED THE MEMORIAL IN AUGUST 1980 AND IN 1981 PLEDGED ONE MILLION DOLLARS FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION WE



ARE WELL ON THE WAY OF ACHIEVING THAT GOAL

THE COMMISSION ON FINE ARTS APPROVED THE PROJECT ON NOVEMBER 10 1981 AND THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION FOLLOWED SUIT ON DECEMBER 3 1981 NOT UNTIL JANUARY OF 1982 DID ANY CONTROVERSY ERUPT OVER THE DESIGN VOICED BY A SMALL MINORITY HOWEVER A COMPROMISE WAS REACHED TO SATISFY THAT MINORITY ON JANUARY 27 1982 THAT COMPROMISE AGREEMENT INCLUDED THE REVISIONS OF A STATUE AND AN AMERICAN FLAG THE AMERICAN LEGION AS A PRIVATE CONTRIBUTOR TO THE FUND PLEDGED TO ERECT THE AMERICAN FLAG AND SUITABLE FLAGPOLE IN FEBRUARY THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND SUBMITTED FINAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AWAITING A MARCH 1 GROUNDBREAKING THE AMERICAN LEGION FEELS THAT THE COMPROMISE STATED ABOVE WAS HONORABLE AND

ON MARCH 4 THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND AT THE REQUEST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR PRESENTED THE COMPROMISE PLAN TO THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION WHICH UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED THE REVISIONS

ON MARCH 9 THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND WILL BE PRESENTING THE REVISED PLAN TO THE NATIONAL FINE ARTS COMMISSION WE ARE

HOPEFUL THAT THE NATIONAL FINE ARTS COMMISSION WILL ALSO SUPPORT THE COMPROMISE

THE AMERICAN LEGION IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY DELAYS OVER THE MINOR REVISIONS AND HOPE THAT THE FINE ARTS COMMISSION WILL GIVE US UNANIMOUS APPROVAL ON MARCH 9 WE FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE MEMORIAL

SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND READY FOR DEDICATION BY VETERANS' DAY  
NOVEMBER 11 1982 WE APPRECIATE YOUR PAST SUPPORT AND WE  
CONGRATULATE THE FIRST LADY NANCY REAGAN'S OUTSTANDING SUPPORT  
TO THIS MEMORIAL PROJECT WE URGE YOU TO HELP THE VETERANS IN THIS  
COUNTRY TO MAKE SURE THAT THIS MEMORIAL IS COMPLETED AND READY FOR  
DEDICATION NOVEMBER 11 1982

JACK W FLYNT  
NATIONAL COMMANDER  
THE AMERICAN LEGION

1619 EST

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*(copy sent to Sec'y Watt 3/4)*

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01 PD INDIANAPOLIS INDIANA MARCH 4 1982

PMS HONORABLE RONALD REAGAN

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON DC 20500

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

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July 2, 1982

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Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

\*Served in Vietnam

Affiliations noted for  
purposes of identification only.

Ms. Carolyn Sunset  
Office of Morton G. Blackwell  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Carolyn:

Thank you very much for sending us the list of religious leaders invited to the April 13 meeting at The White House. We will be contacting these people soon to ask them to consider special prayers and services during the weekend of November 12 to 14, 1982 in honor of all Americans who served in the Vietnam war.

We are confident they will be just as responsive as those we have already contacted. Archbishop John Roach, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has agreed to encourage his parish priests across the country to devote special prayers to our Vietnam veterans and those who died or remain missing during masses on November 14. In a recent meeting with Canon Perry of the Washington Cathedral, they have agreed to make their November 14 11 o'clock service a special one in memory of all who served during the Vietnam war.

Thanks again to you and Mr. Blackwell for being so willing to help us inform the religious community about our special project.

Sincerely yours,

Sandie F.

Sandie Fauriol  
Director  
National Salute to Vietnam Veterans

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Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.

1110 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 308, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 659-2490



William Childs Westmoreland  
General, United States Army, Retired  
Box 1059  
Charleston, South Carolina 29402  
February 17, 1982

Dear Tom:

It has been accepted that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. The simplicity of the design adopted by the panel of judges strikes me as beautiful. You and others feel otherwise.

It is not my views and taste that should determine the design of the memorial, it should be a strong consensus of the Vietnam Veterans. I believe the Executive Committee of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is sensitive to this and are flexible.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

  
W.C. WESTMORELAND

Mr. Tom Carhart  
~~Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund~~  
~~110 Vermont Avenue, N. W.~~  
~~Suite 308~~  
~~Washington, D. C. 20005~~

7304 DARTFORD DR.  
MCLEAN, VA. 22102

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON

Morton -

26 February

I received the enclosed from General Westerland recently. He seems to be proposing, in the second paragraph, that VVMF conduct a survey of Vietnam veterans, to see what they think. Westy has been one of VVMF's firmest supporters and defenders on this Memorial design controversy, and he seems to have hit the nail on the head - before anything is built, let's make sure there is a strong consensus of support among Vietnam veterans generally. VVMF has the money to conduct such a survey - what could be a better resolution of the controversy? I assure you, I and all other critics will be stilled by the results of such a survey. I don't see how VVMF could refuse to conduct one - or even why they haven't done one yet - but let's get on with it!

Tom Corbett  
697-9583