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1/19/82

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Cy K. from Marine
Corps League called -

overwhelming
Support of his group -
anti - memorial design
design is completely out
of context

Wants to hold up
ground breaking until
Perot's Survey is
complete

Marine Corps League has
been against design
since September

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Tom Carhart

697-0260

Sybil Stockdale
telegram
Vietnam veterans
memorial

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 18, 1982

TO: MARTIN ANDERSON
FROM: DANNY BOGGS *DB*
RE: Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Issue:

Should any steps be taken to prevent approval of the current design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as proposed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund?

Background:

Congress, by SJR 119 (1980), authorized the construction, with private funds, of a memorial to Vietnam veterans, to be erected at Constitution Gardens on the Mall. The statute provides that the National Park Service, among other groups, must give its approval to the proposed memorial within 90 days of submission of final plans. NPS must also certify the financial ability of the group to carry out construction before final authority is given.

As a result of substantial controversy over the chosen design, Secretary Watt has indicated that he would take his responsibilities under the statute seriously, and wrote to the head of the VVMF asking for a prompt finalization of plans so that he could review them. (It may be argued that the plans have already been submitted and the 90-day period has already run. However, the plans have been changed significantly since original submission, and a legal appeal to this argument would probably fail.)

Last Thursday, Watt met the proponents of the memorial, but no resolution was reached. He characterized their presentation as "impressive," but also indicated that it would be "a sad day when 'artistic freedom' controls what America should stand for." He inquired as to White House desires on this matter, and appeared quite willing to cooperate in whatever course of action is chosen.

Thirty-one Republican Congressmen have written a letter in opposition to the current design, and a letter from numerous Senators is expected. At the same time, a number of prominent conservative figures have continued in support of the Memorial, including James Jackson Kilpatrick, General Westmoreland, and Bob Hope. (See Attachment 1)

Discussion:

The controversy over the design has included two major elements.

(1) The physical design itself. The memorial will be basically black, recessed into the earth, and the primary motif is a list of the killed and missing.

(2) The inscription and accoutrements. As originally presented, according to some, the memorial would not have mentioned the name of the war involved, contained no flag, no inscription of honor or gratitude.

As the design was revealed, many Vietnam veterans felt that "their" memorial had been hijacked by people of a basically anti-war persuasion. Numerous requests for changes were made. Some of these changes were addressed, but in such a grudging fashion as to reinforce the notion that honoring either the wishes or the persons of the veterans themselves was very far from the thoughts of the VVMF leadership. The opposition is now quite vocal and well organized, as evidenced by the letters cited above, the withdrawal from sponsorship by Ross Perot, James Webb, and other original supporters, and plans for suits by relatives of deceased soldiers to prevent their names from being included in the monument.

On the other hand, many feel that no disrespect has been intended, that the final design is a moving and artistic tribute, and that a political struggle over the meaning of Vietnam is being waged on both sides. Some of the critics have indicated that their concerns could be allayed if the memorial were "white, above ground, and with a flag." It would seem that "above ground" would be the most difficult to alter, while adding a flag would be the easiest.

It does seem to me that a memorial which is taken as offensive by most of those it is designed to honor is both futile and unseemly. At the same time, it is unclear if that is the view of the majority of veterans. Opponents of the current design have offered to have a neutral poll commissioned and to abide by the expressed desire of the majority of veterans. The VVMF has apparently refused. Perot has announced he will fund a poll somewhat along these lines.

Options:

(1) Kill the current design, by Park Service disapproval. This might well kill any national memorial for many years or forever. The fate of the FDR Memorial is instructive. Controversy over design has meant that no memorial has ever been built. At a minimum, new legislation would probably be required, and any future design would probably invite vigorous attack from those who support the current one. This would also cause at least some political furor, as well as undoubtedly drawing the President into expressing, directly or indirectly, some opinion on the design.

(2) Allow the current design to go through. This will undoubtedly also create considerable political discontent. The opponents have indicated that they will go to great lengths to stop construction, including lawsuits, probably attempts at Congressional action, and even various types of direct action.

(3) There has been some indication that the inscription and surrounding trappings could be changed enough to satisfy most of the organized opponents. The VVMF has thus far refused to be responsive. It is at least possible that with sufficient pressure, in the form of threats of non-approval, satisfactory language could be worked out. This is an option that should be seriously explored, as a way out of the all-or-nothing controversy created by a choice of either Options 1 or 2.

Very recently there appears to have been some additional willingness to negotiate on the part of the memorial supporters. For example, in a Wall Street Journal piece last Thursday, Jan Scruggs, the President of the VVMF, indicated "we favor having an American flag flying at the site." This could indicate greater willingness to be accommodating, now that significant opposition has been aroused.

The inscription has also been a point of controversy that opponents indicate could be a part of changes that would allow a suitable resolution. The current language includes a Prologue:

In honor of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in Vietnam. The names of those who gave their lives, and of those who remain missing, are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.

The Epilogue contains the following words:

Our nation remembers the courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty of its Vietnam veterans.

This has been criticized as lacking any expression of recognition, gratitude, or true sense of appreciation or honor, that it recognizes only death, not the ideals of "Duty, Honor, Country."

Recommendation:

I would recommend that primary attention be given to Option 3. Watt could meet now with opponents, as he has with the proponents, and attempt to reach some compromise on the wording and trappings. If that fails, Options 1 and 2 can be addressed.

A Memorial Ditch on the Mall

Patrick J. Buchanan

On the first of March, just two months away, ground will be broken on the Mall to construct—purportedly to honor the veterans of Vietnam—a memorial that will be a mockery of the sacrifices of



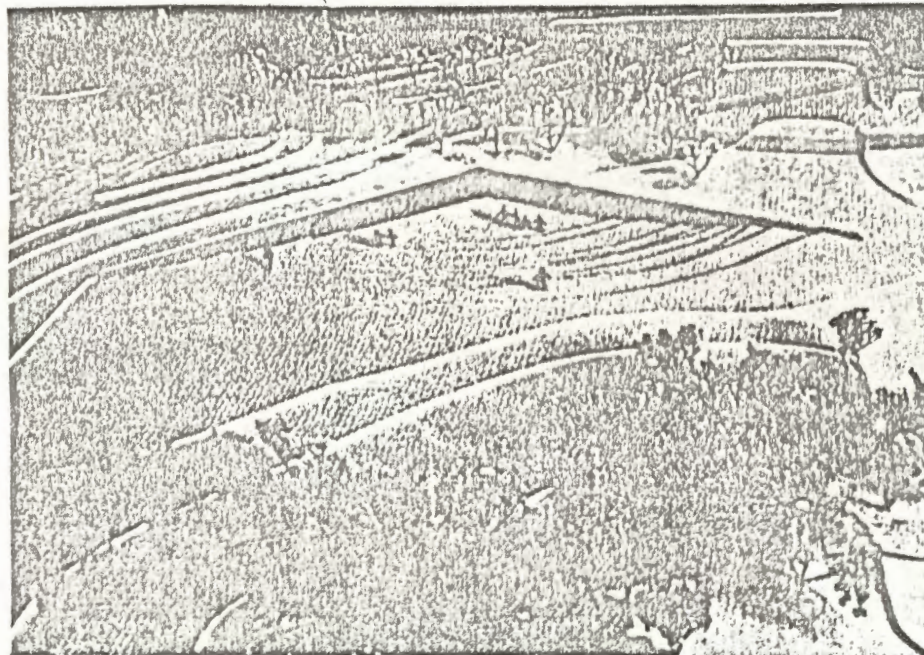
those who served, "a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrations."

That is the hard view of former Marine platoon leader James Webb Jr., author of "Fields of Fire," who resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, to protest the memorial design. It is apparently the view as well of Adm. James Stockdale, one of the three American prisoners of war awarded the Congressional medal of honor, who likewise resigned. It is the view of the Marine Corps League, which has withdrawn its support for the memorial as insulting and denigrating those who came home from Vietnam and those who did not.

Yet, as this is written, funds continue to trickle in to the VVMF. Unless there is some form of national protest, this final national outrage will be perpetrated against the memory of the Vietnam veteran.

Here is how it came about.

In 1980, Congress commissioned a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to design and build, with private capital, a suitable memorial on the Mall to "honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Vietnam War."



Ross Perot, the Texas businessman who has contributed much to the veterans' cause, came forward with most of the funding, including the funds necessary to conduct a national competition on the memorial design. He was promised that the result, while not glorifying war, would do honor to those who went.

When the competition was completed, many veterans were stunned at the outcome. The winner was Maya Ying Lin, a Yale architectural student, who had designed a memorial not to the veterans, but only to the dead.

Her winning design consists of two walls of over 200 feet each, starting at ground level, and converging at an angle of 135 degrees—10 feet below the ground.

The American flag under which the veterans fought was not to fly over the memorial in the original design; the word Vietnam was nowhere mentioned; the walls would be black granite, not white marble, and upon them would be inscribed the names of the 57,000 who died—in the chronological order of their deaths.

The "purpose" of this memorial, wrote the New Republic, is "to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all . . . To treat the Vietnam dead like some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000."

Ross Perot took one look at the winning design and washed his hands of it.

How did it happen that the VVMF

could settle upon a ditch on the Mall and a black Wall of Shame as fitting memorial to those who served?

Relatively simple. Not a single Vietnam veteran served on the judging panel that selected Miss Lin's design. No Vietnam veteran was *allowed* to serve on a panel which contained several members outspokenly hostile to the national effort to stop North Vietnam's conquest of the South; one member allegedly had a long association with the American Communist Party.

If this trench is dug, and those black granite walls are sunk into the earth of the Mall, those 57,000 war dead, whose names will be inscribed in perpetuity, will be conscripted again and again at rallies on behalf of causes of the self-same people who mocked their sacrifices while they lived and helped to cancel their achievements after they died. That trench would be a permanent political statement endorsing the view of the American left: that the Vietnam veterans fought and died in a worthless cause.

Already, according to Tom Carhart, twice-wounded platoon leader with the 101st Airborne who is mobilizing opposition to this "black gash of sorrow and shame," relatives of the war dead are coming forward to keep the names of their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons off the granite slabs.

The hour is late; but not too late for urgent appeals to Congress and, especially, the President, whose secretary of the Interior must approve the digging. The most persuasive voices that could be raised would surely be those of the veterans themselves, rising in angry protest against this last, final exploitation of their fallen comrades.

HENRY J. HYDE
6TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
JUDICIARY
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Bill Gubbin

1203 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4561

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

January 12, 1982

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 unedifying memorial from representing our Nation's public statement about men and women who deserve far better from us.

Sincerely,

Henry J. Hyde
Henry J. Hyde

HJH:fw

cc: Honorable James Watt

Phil Crane

PHILIP CRANE, ILLINOIS

Robert J. Lacomarsino

ROBERT LACOMARSINO, CALIFORNIA

L.A. Skip Bafalis

L.A. (SKIP) BAFALIS, FLORIDA

Bobbi Fiedler

BOBBI FIEDLER, CALIFORNIA

Charles F. Dougherty

CHARLES DOUGHERTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Ed Derwinski

EDWARD DERWINSKI, ILLINOIS

George Wortley

GEORGE WORTLEY, NEW YORK

Bill Goodling

WILLIAM GOODLING, PENNSYLVANIA

Tom Tauke

THOMAS TAUKE, IOWA

Will Dickinson

WILLIAM DICKINSON, ALABAMA

Hank Brown

HANK BROWN, COLORADO

Bill Emerson

BILL EMERSON, MISSOURI

Jerry Lewis

JERRY LEWIS, CALIFORNIA

Gary A. Lee

GARY LEE, NEW YORK

Clair Burgener

CLAIR BURGNER, CALIFORNIA

Doug Berenter

DOUGLAS BERENTER, NEBRASKA

M Caldwell Butler

CALDWELL BUTLER, VIRGINIA

Olympia Snowe

OLYMPIA SNOWE, MAINE

Don Ritter

DON RITTER, PENNSYLVANIA

John Hiler

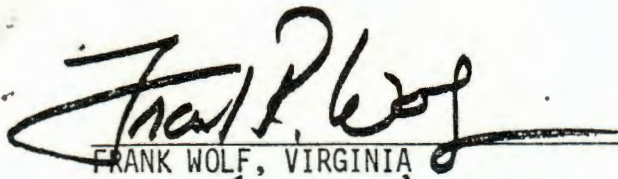
JOHN HILER, INDIANA

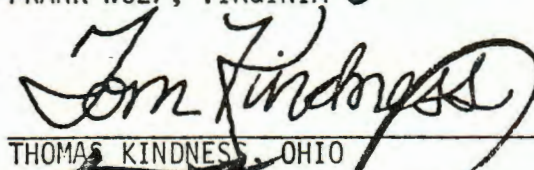
Norm Shumway

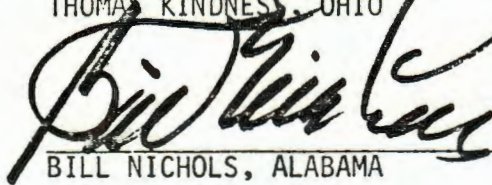
NORMAN SHUMWAY, CALIFORNIA

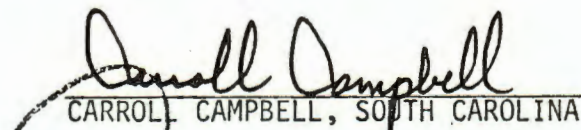
George O'Brien

GEORGE O'BRIEN, ILLINOIS

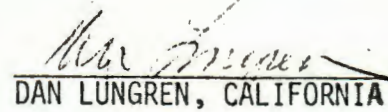

FRANK WOLF, VIRGINIA

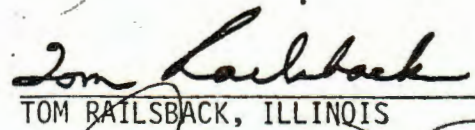

THOMAS KINDNESS, OHIO

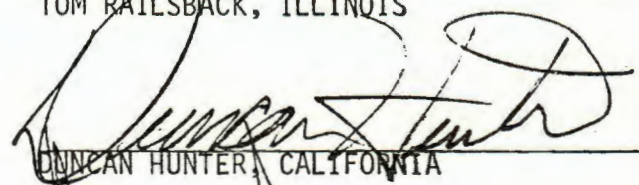

BILL NICHOLS, ALABAMA

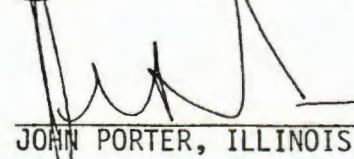

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Reassessing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

By JAMES H. WEBB JR.

I, like many Vietnam veterans I have spoken to, face a Hobson's choice with respect to the proposed Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Having served on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's National Sponsoring Committee, and having also worked on Capitol Hill to help gain passage of the authorizing resolution, I want very much to see a memorial on the Mall. On the other hand, I believe the memorial chosen through the recent design competition is, as other detractors have maintained, a nihilistic statement that does not render honor to those who served.

In 1980 the Congress authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) to erect with private funds a memorial that would "honor and recognize the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war." The fund, which was the brainchild of a small group of Washington-based Vietnam veterans, held a nationwide design competition, with jurors selected on the basis of their eminence in the artistic and architectural community.

The winning design, which the fund proposes to build in Constitution Gardens just off the mall in time for Veterans Day 1982,

consists of two black walls, joining at a 135-degree angle, with one wall pointing toward the Lincoln Memorial and one toward the Washington Monument. The top of the memorial will remain at ground level, while the base will recede into the earth to a depth of 10 feet where the two walls join. On the walls will be the names of those who perished in the war, listed chronologically, supposedly in the order they fell. There will be no flag, no images indicative of war. The original design did not carry the word "Vietnam," though now a short inscription is apparently planned where the walls meet. It will be, as writer and Vietnam veteran Al Santoli mentioned to me, "a place to go and be depressed."

What is one to do? Is any memorial better than no memorial? At what point does a piece of architecture cease being a memorial to service and instead become a mockery of that service, a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrators? And most importantly, how did this travesty, this unwinnable paradox, come about?

It is important to make one clarification. The dissatisfaction with the proposed design is not the product of the far right, which has been panned in some recent articles as wanting to see a Vietnam era update of the two Jima memorial, nor is it the product of a few disgruntled contestants in the design competition. The issue is whether this design meets the congressional mandate to "honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Vietnam war." All this talk of a memorial "suitably capturing the national feeling about Vietnam," whatever that is and whatever else it might be 10 or 100 years from now, is secondary to that mandated purpose. If it does, fine. But it must first honor and recognize those who served.

The present design does neither. First, it is a memorial only to the dead. Maya Lin, its designer, has been very clear on this point, stating that "this memorial is not meant as a memorial to the individual, but rather as a memorial to the men and women who died during the war, as a whole."

The New Republic magazine took umbrage at this conception of the memorial. "Its purpose," the magazine said, "is to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all. It is an unfortunate choice of memorial To treat the Vietnam dead like the victims of some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000 It is surely an excess of revisionist zeal."

A memorial devoid of embellishment, which will take up almost 200 yards of the Capitol Mall to list the names of the dead on a long black wall, violates the congressional mandate, and also violates the repeated assurances given early supporters by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. In addition to me, Admiral James B. Stockdale, Medal of Honor winner and the dean of the American prisoners of war, has resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Fund for so long as this design prevails.

Businessman Ross Perot, who provided nearly all of the funding for the memorial project from its inception in 1979 until the design for this memorial was chosen, including the funds for the design competition itself, quietly withdrew upon seeing the winning design. Mr. Perot, a Naval Academy graduate who has been widely active in projects that recognize the positive achievements of servicemen and veterans, had been repeatedly assured by the Fund's directors that the monument would not glorify war, but would honor the dead while giving primary emphasis to recognizing the heroic service of those who fought and returned. Manifestly, it does not.

Those who support the design argue, on being confronted with such dissent, that sour grapes are inevitable, that the design competition was the most extensive in history, and that the design itself is

"neutral," allowing each observer to make his own conclusion about the war and those who died. But this design should not be neutral. We are invading for all time the privacy of those who perished in the war by publishing their names on the memorial, and this should not be done except in the most affirmative sense of honor and recognition.

Architectural understatement is hardly called for when we are dealing with the heroic and honorable loss of life. If citizens and international visitors wish to reach a conclusion regarding the American involvement in Vietnam while studying the memorial, it should begin with that premise. Thus, if there were to be sour grapes, the cries should have been that there was too much honor. If that is possible, rather than not enough.

One of the most unfortunate and moving testimonies to this point came from the widow of a fellow Marine, a man whom I deeply respected and fondly remember. No supporter of the war herself, she likened the blackness, the lack of ornateness, the very emptiness of this design to the reaction she had upon seeing the ovens at Dachau. No honor there, but rather a rubbing of the world's face into the grisly shame of the deaths. "It would be better to not have a memorial at all," she concluded.

How could such a design have prevailed? It is true that there were more entries in this competition than any other in history. But through what filter did they pass? Who decided on the winner? When the winner was announced, I called the memorial fund office and asked whether a Vietnam veteran had been on the judging panel. I was told, astoundingly, that no Vietnam veterans were considered qualified, though it is traditional in such competitions for a layperson directly concerned with the project to sit as a judge, to provide a balance. Later, the VVMF officially stated that "a factor militating against a Vietnam veteran 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."

A Desire to Avoid Any Symbol

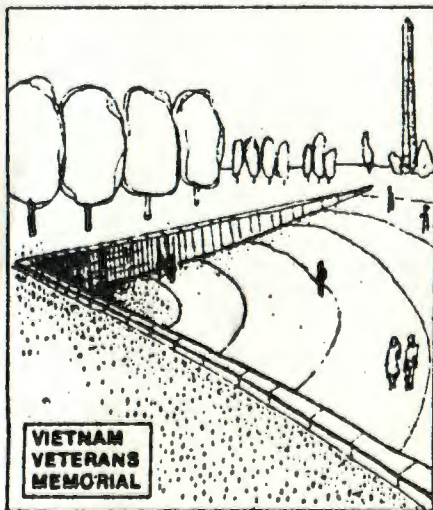
There have been charges and countercharges regarding the antiwar activities of several members of the jury. At a minimum, it is clear that there were members who had been bitterly opposed to the war, and the winning design seems to reflect a desire to avoid any symbol or statement that would put the war or those who fought it in an affirmative light. It should be remembered that the winning design, when

"Vietnam" on it, nor did it say anything whatsoever about those who had served. From the results of the competition, the judges undoubtedly agreed with William Greider's recent perception in the Washington Post, supporting the proposed design, that "our shared memories of that war do not include any suitably heroic images which a sculptor could convert to stone or bronze."

Most Vietnam veterans who watched the daily sacrifices of their peers in combat would quickly disagree with such a view of the "honor and recognition" that is their due, and the lack of this affirmative viewpoint is demonstrable in the winning design. As the descendant of any man who fought for the Confederacy can assure you, it is not necessary for a nation to have won a war in order for its soldiers to have fought heroically. The Vietnam veteran deserves a memorial that can make this same distinction.

In the interest of compromise, those who oppose the present design have asked that it be made white, above ground, and have a flag at the juncture of the two walls. The VVMF has the power to make such changes, with very little damage to the process by which they arrived at the design itself. Should they not, perhaps the public should reject the design by refusing to pay for it. Since this memorial is to be built with private funds, it should thus reflect the judgment of those who make its construction possible. One hopes that contributors would not hasten in their good intentions to honor those who served, and in the end bankroll a subtle but real denigration.

Mr. Webb was a Marine rifle platoon commander in Vietnam and is the author of two novels, "Fields of Fire" and "A Sense of Honor." Until recently he was minority counsel to the House Veterans Affairs Committee.



3/12 Tom Skolo - w/ ^(Vietnam Vets) fellow worked at
THE WHITE HOUSE where -
Dick Danner WASHINGTON Statue-center
(6431)

Pivot - ^(flag - apex betw. 2 walls)
will lobby ag. design
Jim Baker Made groundbreaking
contingent on putting
all pieces together

original agreement
said contingent
on ~~groundbreaking~~
dedication

no other avenues -
legal -

exer. comm^{tee} to

put Status

Choice

Proponents +

Opponents



MCROA

Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association
201 N. Washington St., Suite 206
Alexandria, Va. 22314
(703) 548-7607

*Vietnam
Veterans
Memorial*

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Col Robert L. Talbert
MCROA
1 Constitution Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002

9 February 1982

General Robert H. Barrow USMC
Commandant of The Marine Corps
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (code CMC)
Washington, D.C. 20380

Dear General Barrow:

Per our conversation regarding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial during the visit of Colonel Vince McGarry, National President, to your office on February 4, 1982, enclosure (1) is provided for information. The enclosure was prepared by Cy Kammeier, Executive Director, Marine Corps League who has been an active opponent of the original design of the memorial.

During the visit you expressed interests which I feel are adequately addressed in the point paper enclosed.

Should you desire further information please let me know.

Sincerely,

Bob Talbert
Robert L. Talbert
Colonel USMCR (RET)
Executive Director

POINT PAPER

Subj: Vietnam Veterans Memorial

1. BACKGROUND.

a. The effort to construct a Vietnam veterans memorial was undertaken by a group of Vietnam veterans in 1979. Under the leadership of a Jan Scruggs, a federal government employee, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., a private non-profit and non-partisan organization was incorporated in Washington, D. C., for the purposes: to create, through private contributions, a memorial in the nation's capital to those who died and who served in Vietnam; to provide funds to complete the Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel in Eagle Nest, New Mexico; and to contribute to other memorials to Vietnam War casualties and veterans in other locations. (TAB A).

b. The community of various veterans and military related organizations generally supported the concept, as well as legislation to provide authorization 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. (TAB B).

c. A National Design Competition was held, with jurors selected on the basis of their eminence in the artistic and architectural community. The winning design consisting of two subsurface black walls, to be inscribed with the names of the Vietnam dead was submitted by Maya Ying Lin, a Yale architectural student. The design prescribes that the top of the memorial will remain at ground level, while the base will recede into the earth to a depth of 10 feet where the two walls join. (TAB C).

2. CONTROVERSY.

a. The Marine Corps League was the only veterans organization opposing the selected design, with their statement as the approved position of the Marine Corps League: "The design that has been selected is inappropriate. It represents an insult to the memory of those it is intended to memorialize. The Vietnam veterans deserve better. The Marine Corps League hereby withdraws its support to the memorial in the design that is now proposed." (TAB D). The Heritage Foundation joined in the opposition and issued a backgrounder (TAB E). As the controversy grew, support for the opposition also grew. The Honorable Henry Hyde of the U. S. House of Representatives gathered 30 signatures in the House and advised The President: "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 unedifying memorial from representing our Nation's public statement about men and women who deserve far better from us." (TAB F).

b. Other veterans organizations, such as the American Legion and the VFW, have refused to get involved in the controversy out of fear that their involvement might kill the memorial altogether; and they already are laboring to overcome anti-Vietnam veteran perceptions. Others, however, perceive it as, "give them their memorial and tell them to shut up -- after all, it's Vietnam veterans that are in charge."

c. Mr. H. Ross Perot, a national patriotic figure and successful businessman, was an early supporter of the memorial. He personally provided the initial funding for the organization of the VVMF and for the design competition. Upon viewing the selected design, however, he withdrew his support; as did Marine author James H. Webb, Jr., and several others who were on the sponsoring committee of the VVMF. Senator John Warner, the prime mover in the Senate for the legislation which provided the site for the memorial entered the controversy by holding a meeting in his office on January 31, 1982. Present, in addition to Senator Warner, were Mr. H. Ross Perot, other organization representatives, including the Marine Corps League and Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association, who had expressed concern with the selected design; and members of the VVMF. Out of that meeting, and heated dispute, came an agreement to modify the memorial through the inclusion of the American flag at the apex of the "V", and a fighting figure to be located in front of the walls atop of a base, properly inscribed to honor those who served in the Vietnam War.

3. CONCLUSION. While the meeting as described in 2c above appears to have muted the general controversy regarding the memorial, the final selection of the fighting figure and its exact placement; and the exact placement of the flag remain the responsibility of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The final design of the memorial, including its modifications, will require the approval of the Secretary of the Interior before ground-breaking and / or construction begin. In the final analysis, there are still those who have reservations regarding the final design of the memorial, principally, the inclusion of black granite of foreign (India) origin; the subsurface "V" structure and the chronological listing of names, without indication of grade or Service. Jim Webb stated, "Likened to the victims of a massive traffic accident." The VVMF response to this criticism is that they intend to construct a kiosk which will provide a Rolodex-type alphabetical location finder which will also indicate grade and Service at time of death.

4. COGNIZANT AGENCIES / OFFICES.

a. The White House has expressed an interest in the final design via the Office of Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, Mr. Morton Blackwell at 456-2657. Mr. Meese has been apprised of the status of the memorial to date.

b. Secretary of the Interior, James S. Watt, whose final approval is required, can be contacted at 655-4000.

c. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., principal organizers of the effort and ultimately responsible for construction of the memorial - contact: Jan Scruggs, President, VVMF, or Colonel Don Sheat, USMC (Ret.), Executive Director. 659-1151.

d. Commission on Fine Arts; one of the tertiary approval authorities can be reached at 566-1066; and the National Capital Planning Commission, another approval authority can be reached at 724-0174.

e. Senator John Warner, who simply assumed responsibility for the memorial as a result of his legislative and arbitration efforts, may be reached at 224-2023.

f. Department of Defense: Office of OASD (PA). It is understood that DOD had previously been queried regarding the selected design and that their response reflected: "A private initiative beyond the purview of the Department of Defense."

5. RECOMMENDATION. At this date, and considering the general consensus of agreement to construct the memorial with certain modifications, about the only recourse to voice concurrence or objections regarding the ultimate design of the memorial, would be through The White House, namely Mr. Edwin Meese, and such action is so recommended.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

news



Official Publication of the Marine Corps League

Jul/Aug 1979

Our Flag...

**Our
Country...**



...The United States Marine Corps

test of Korea, and the divisive conflict in Southeast Asia, our Stars and Stripes remained as the symbol of freedom and democracy throughout the world. It remained unblemished and untarnished as we witnessed a change in presidents as a result of Watergate.

The symbol of American will, flies onward through the far reaches of space and carries with it the technological and pioneering spirit of the greatest nation on earth, with its roots in the educational system we have all shared. It carries the lifeblood of our forebears who have fought for it, who have died for it, and who have achieved under it.

So, in revering the Flag on this special day, it is not in what it is, but in what it represents; not only in a historical perspective, but as a symbol of our faith in our America in the years ahead.

On this Flag Day, the 14th of June, 1979, I salute this national symbol; and I salute you, for our contributions made together in keeping our Stars and Stripes as the hope of the world—Of a great plan of life worked out by a great people."

4th AMTRAC REUNION

The 4th Marine Amtrac Battalion is having a reunion in Helena, Montana in August. For particulars write to Tom Velkamp, Route 1, Box 49, Manhattan, Montana, or call (406) 282-7932.

GROUP FORMS TO BUILD VIETNAM VETERAN MEMORIAL

In August of 1968 Marine Corps Lieutenant David Westphal died alongside twelve other young American marines when they were ambushed in Vietnam. Dr. Victor Westphal, a historian and author, was the father of the Marine officer. A few months later, this grieving parent alone began construction on what some call one of the most beautiful buildings in North America - the Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel in

(Continued on page 10)

Marine Corps League News - Jul/Aug 1979 **PRESIDENT HONORS VIETNAM VETERANS**



The White House—President Carter said that this nation has not done enough "to recognize and to reward the special heroism" of our American soldiers who served in Vietnam as he spoke at a special reception honoring Vietnam veterans at the White House. The reception was one of a series of events commemorating Vietnam Veterans Week, observed throughout the nation. At the ceremony, the President and Deputy Postmaster General James V. P.

Conway jointly unveiled the design of a new U.S. postage stamp paying tribute to Vietnam veterans. To the President's right are the First Lady and Max Cleland, Administrator of the Veterans Administration.

Herb Harmon, National Legal Counsel of the Marine Corps League, represented National Commandant Jim Frost and all members of the Marine Corps League at the White House function on the afternoon of June 6, 1979.



(Continued from page 8)

Eagle Nest, New Mexico. For over a decade Dr. Westphall invested tens of thousands of dollars and has put one-quarter million miles on his cars in order to build a visible reminder of the most tragic consequence of war - the loss of loved ones.

The vast wing-like structure rises to a height of nearly fifty feet. Inside, there is a display of pictures of American servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice in our nation's most controversial war. About half of the photographs have been delivered by parents who have driven from all over the United

States. Senator Pete V. Domenici of New Mexico introduced a bill to have this historical monument made into part of the National Park System. Much to his dismay, the National Park System Advisory board rejected Dr. Westphall's contribution.

On 27 April 1979 the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., a non-profit and non partisan organization, was incorporated in Washington, D.C. Their three purposes are: to create, through private contributions, a memorial in the nation's capitol to those who died and who served in Vietnam; to provide

funds to complete the Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel; and to contribute to other memorials to Vietnam War casualties and veterans in other locations. The Memorial Fund will dissolve at such time as a memorial to American Vietnam War casualties and returnees is built in Washington, D.C. through private contributions.

Contributions may be sent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 50096, Washington, D.C. 20004. Contributions are tax deductible by the donor.

THE CANDIDATES

FOR NATIONAL COMMANDANT

NATIONAL SENIOR VICE COMMANDANT, PAUL F. HASTINGS, BIDS FOR TOP SLOT

(Submitted by the Committee to elect Paul Hastings)



Paul F. Hastings

Marine Paul F. Hastings has formally announced his candidacy for the number one post of the Marine Corps League.

As background information on the candidate, Hastings enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at age 17 while attending high school in 1950. Upon graduation he was ordered to active duty with the organized

Marine Corps Reserve unit of Harrisburg, PA. Ordered with the unit to Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, NC he was reassigned to Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA for duty with the 22d Marines; later designated as Schools Troops. Following 18 months of active duty, he was released from active duty.

Returning to Harrisburg, PA and as a member of the local Reserve unit, he was selected for assignment to the officers training course at Quantico under the meritorious noncommissioned officers program, and which subsequently led to his commissioning as a second lieutenant of Marines. Active duty assignments included postings at Camp Pendleton; with the 3d Marine Division in Japan; the Marine Corps Supply School, Camp Lejeune; the 1st Marine Division; the 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa; the Marine Corps Supply Activity in Philadelphia; MCAS, Beaufort; the Force Logistics Command, Danang, Republic of Vietnam; and the Headquarters of FMFPac in Hawaii. In 1971 Hastings was reassigned to Philadelphia for processing in connection with a medical disability, and was placed on the retired list of Marine officers.

Hastings served in enlisted grades of private through technical sergeant, and as an officer, second lieutenant through major; his present grade on the retired list. For his service while serving in Vietnam, Hastings was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", and later the Meritorious Service Medal for his service on the staff of Headquarters, FMFPac. He is also authorized to wear the Korean

Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, with four stars; the good Conduct Medal with two stars; the Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon. In addition, he holds the Marine Corps Silver Distinguished Rifle Marksmanship Badge.

Within the League, Hastings has served two tours of duty as a Detachment Commandant, one year as Assistant Central Division Vice Commandant, and one year as Division Vice Commandant for the Department of Pennsylvania. Within the Department of Pennsylvania, he served over two years as Senior Vice Commandant and currently serves as the Department Commandant in addition to his duties as National Senior Vice Commandant. He is the Past Chairman of the National Budget and Finance Committee, an concurrent with his election as National Senior Vice Commandant. National Commandant Frost tasked him as Chairman of the Long Range Financial Planning Committee.

In recognition of his past service to the League, the National Commandant awarded him the Distinguished Citizen Medal, Gold and two awards of the Distinguished Service Award. At the Division and the Department levels, he was awarded the Distinguished Citizens Medal, Silver and Bronze respectively. In 1979 Hastings was singularly recognized within his Department for exceptional service through award of the highest honor by being named the Department of Pennsylvania Marine of the Year.

Hastings is a life member of the Marine Corps League, the Disabled

Public Law 96-297
96th Congress

Joint Resolution

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

July 1, 1980

[S.J. Res. 119]

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.

Vietnam
Veterans
Memorial Fund,
Inc.,
establishment.
16 USC 431 note.

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.

Location
authorization.

(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.

Design plans.

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

Expenses.

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.

Termination of
authority.

Memorial
maintenance.

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.

Approved July 1, 1980.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 96-1129 (Comm. of Conference).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 96-663 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources) and No. 96-832 (Comm. of Conference).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 126 (1980):

Apr. 30, considered and passed Senate.

May 20, considered and passed House, amended.

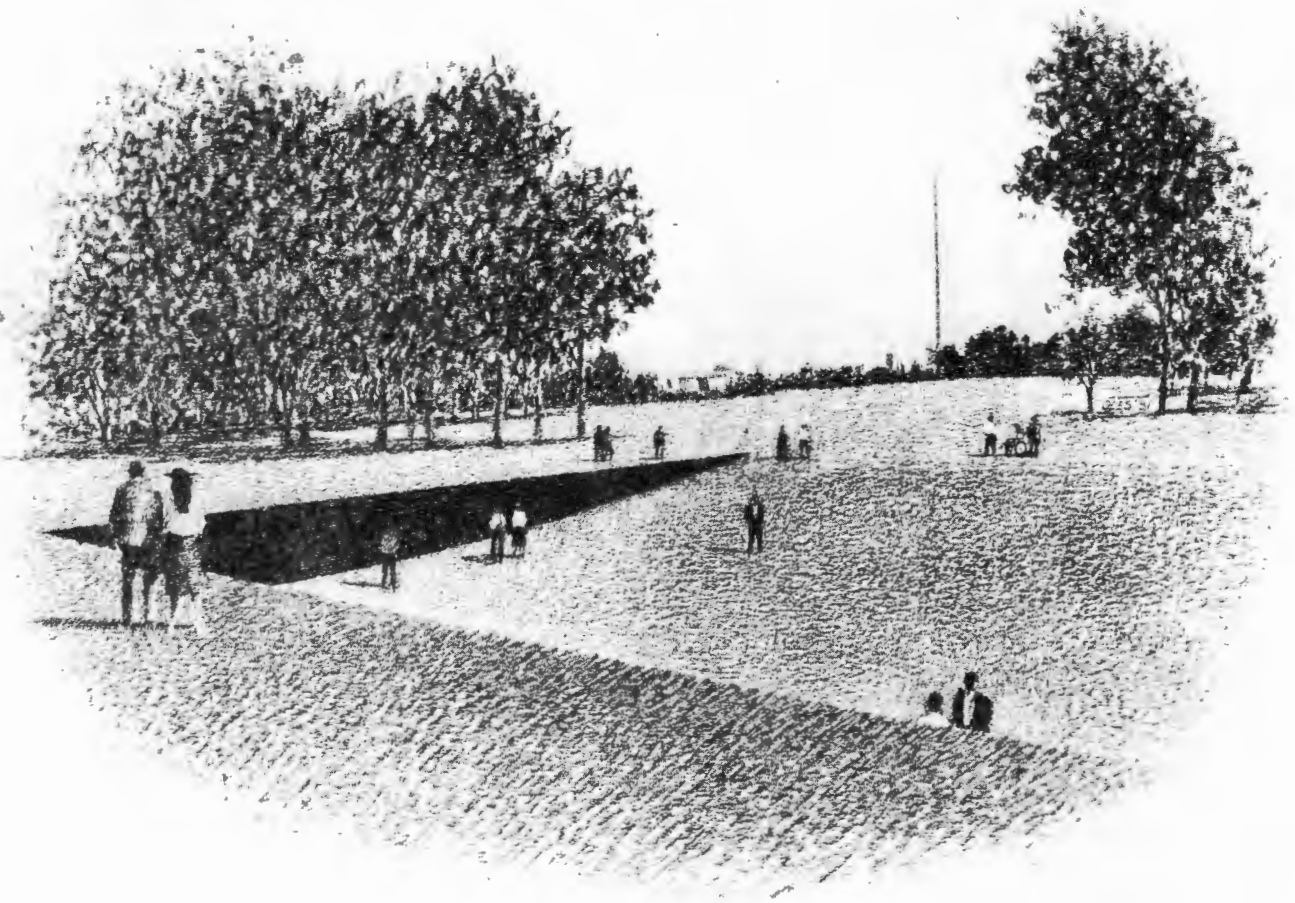
June 27, House agreed to conference report.

June 30, Senate agreed to conference report.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 16, No. 27:

July 1, Presidential statement.

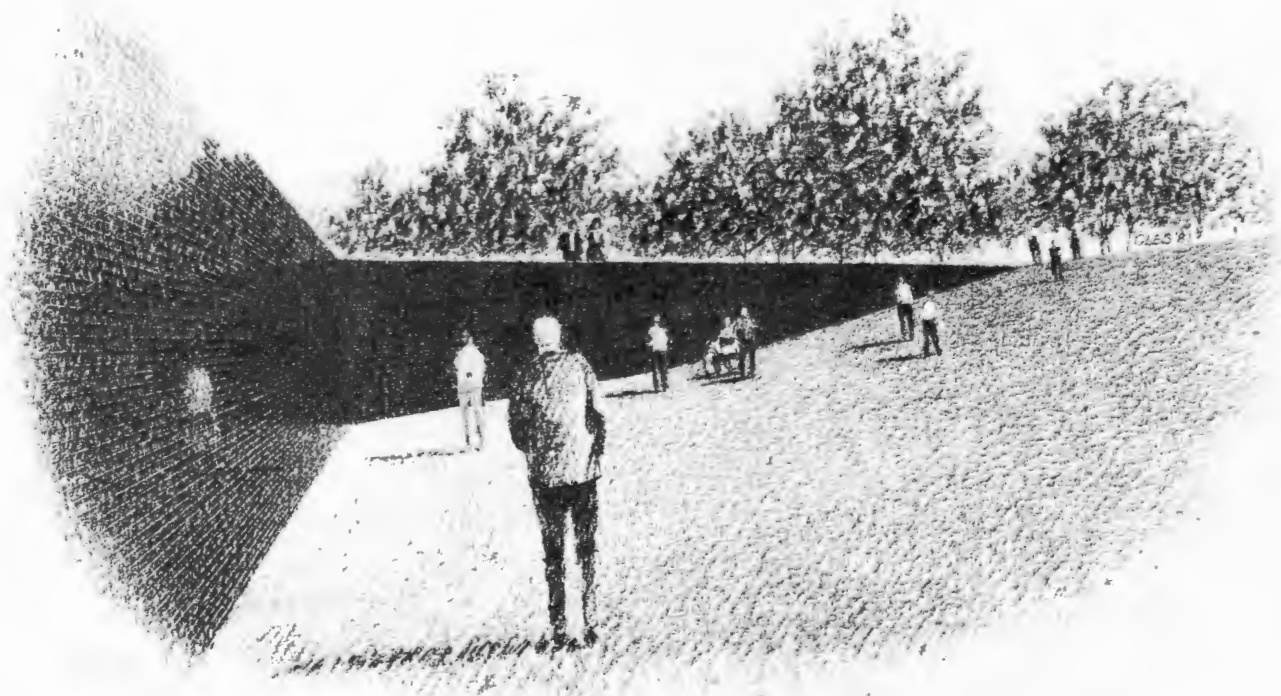




VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.

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





Marine Corps League

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

Incorporated by an Act of Congress

Lt. Gen. John A. Lejeune
Founder

October 22, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subj: Legislative Committee Meeting

1. A meeting of the National Legislative Committee was called by the Chairman, Richard W. Johnson, Jr., to convene at the Capital Hill Club at 1230 this date. The following members were present:

Richard W. Johnson, Jr. - Chairman
C. A. (Mack) McKinney
Herbert N. Harmon
James H. Webb, Jr.
C. L. Kammeier
BGen. J. D. Hittle, USMC (Ret.)

2. An agenda of topics was presented by the Chairman, as identified by the subparagraphs following, and with the outcome based on majority vote as follows:

a. Education Bill. To support national legislative to reinstate educational benefits, similar to the "GI Bill" including provisions for transferability to dependents on a contributory basis. There was one abstention in voting based on a preference for transferability on a noncontributory basis. Carried by majority vote to support on contributory basis.

b. Unemployment Compensation. The President's Budget Reform Act recently approved by the U. S. Congress provides that Unemployment Compensation may be paid to those veterans who serve one year of military service or greater and who may be discharged for reasons other than completion of their military service, and to those who are not recommended for reenlistment. The provision denies unemployment compensation to those military service members who are discharged with honorable service and who are recommended for reenlistment. The committee was unanimous in supporting legislation to provide for eligibility for Unemployment Compensation for those military service members who are discharged as a result of honorable service, or who are transferred to the retired list.

c. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The National Legislative Committee has gone on record as supporting the concept of a suitable Vietnam Veterans Memorial, including the federal grant of property in the nation's capital. Following the Congressional approval of the land grant a design competition was held and the final selection of the memorial design has been approved by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The Legislative Committee adopted the following as a unanimous statement of position regarding the memorial. "The design that has been selected is inappropriate. It represents an insult to the memory of those it is intended

"ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE"

to memorialize. The Vietnam veterans deserve better. The Marine Corps League hereby withdraws its support to the memorial in the design that is now proposed." (The National Commandant was advised of the decision of the National Legislative Committee and telephonically voiced his support of the decision.)

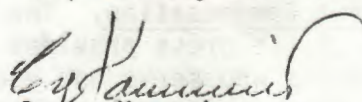
d. AWACS. The Committee reconfirmed its earlier telephonic approval of the President's AWACS Package for the nation of Saudi Arabia.

e. Federal legislation to change the provisions of Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)(19). The provisions of the IRS Code now require that War Veterans Organizations filing for tax exemption under 501(c)(19) maintain a membership to include not less than 75% war time veterans as defined by the U. S. Congress. The Marine Corps League National Legislative Committee unanimously adopted to support legislation to modify the requirements of the code to require members of war veterans organizations to be veterans or active duty members of the Armed Services, and which would exclude the present requirement of war time service for 75% of its total membership.

f. Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Program. Inequities in the program, which basically provides for compensation to dependents of deceased service members based on military rank of the deceased member was discussed. Following discussion, the matter was tabled for future study and another meeting.

g. Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). The National Legislative Committee adopted a position of opposing restructuring of military retirement, Social Security Benefits, veterans benefits and other federal benefits Cost of Living Adjustments, which are now keyed to inflation and as determined by the Consumer Price Index. The committee vote reflected one abstention; however, the position was adopted by majority vote. The committee also adopted a recommendation to send a letter on behalf of the Marine Corps League to the President urging him to stick by a campaign promise, and which obtained the support of the retired military community, which reflected that he would not alter the cost of living pay adjustments for retired military members.

Respectfully submitted,


C. L. Kammeier
Recorder

Copy to:
Natl Bd of Trustees
Department Commandants

December 7, 1981

THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL

INTRODUCTION

With the enactment July 1, 1980, of Senate Joint Resolution 119, authorizing the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund to establish a memorial "...in honor and recognition of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in Vietnam," it appeared that at long last the U.S. would pay tribute to the 2.7 million Americans who fought in Southeast Asia. The broad support for building such a monument was demonstrated by the fact that 196 Members of the House and all 100 Senators co-sponsored the law. In short order, the VVMF assembled an impressive list of project sponsors ranging from Bob Hope, the perennial champion of GI's, to George McGovern, one of the Vietnam War's harshest critics.

For the Vietnam veteran, authorization of a memorial was of special importance. In contrast to his World War II and Korean War predecessors, the Vietnam veteran came home to no triumphal welcome. In too many instances, he was received with hostility and ostracism. At worst, his contemporaries viewed him as some sort of wanton destroyer who supported a corrupt and repressive regime. At best, he was simply ignored. No one thanked him.

The media also made reintegration of the Vietnam veterans difficult by constantly portraying them as drug-crazed walking time bombs. This characterization has been used so frequently that it has now become a Hollywood cliché -- despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Vietnam veterans have proved themselves responsible, productive members of their communities. Negative characterizations simply have reinforced the subtle prejudices which militate against the complete assimilation of the Vietnam veteran into the American mainstream. Is it thus any wonder that many Vietnam veterans monitored the progress of the VVMF with anxious anticipation of the day when their sacrifice

would receive the same tribute and recognition as that of veterans of prior conflicts?

Recognition is well-deserved. The average combat veteran of a year in Southeast Asia saw more actual fighting than the World War II G.I. who fought in every major campaign in Europe. U.S. troops in Vietnam had one of the lowest desertion rates in American military history and fought in one of the roughest climates ever experienced by Americans.

THE DESIGN OF THE MONUMENT

The most traditional means of designing a national monument has been to choose a noted architect or sculptor to execute it. The design of the Vietnam veteran's memorial, however, was selected by a national competition. Designs were judged by a blue-ribbon panel, with the winner receiving a \$20,000 prize. Money was raised from the public and few problems arose until the design selection was announced.

The selection panel chose the proposal of Maya Ying Lin, a Yale undergraduate. Her design consists of two 200-foot long horizontal walls of black granite, forming a "V." The top of the walls are level with the ground, and the inside of the "V" is at the bottom of a five degree incline so that only that portion is exposed. Those killed or missing in Vietnam are to be listed on the ten-foot high exposed portion in chronological order of their death or disappearance.

Almost as soon as the design was announced, controversy erupted. The Washington Post characterized the design as "a black rift in the earth." Tom Carhart, a decorated combat veteran, called it a "black gash of shame and sorrow." Other veterans expressed similar dismay at "the black trench." Contributors to the memorial fund were also taken aback. The VVMF was to be supported solely through private contributions solicited through direct mail. All solicitation letters were of a general nature, stressing patriotic themes and the need to pay some sort of tribute to the Vietnam veteran. By and large, contributors expected that a conventional design would be selected and that the design would honor the living as well as the dead. Many who learned of the stark nature of the proposed monument thus feel that they have been misled.

Those involved in the design's selection quickly rallied to its support. An official of the Fine Arts Commission, one of the agencies which approved the design, called it "a suitable, dignified, and understated type of memorial." In a letter to the Marine Corps League, Robert W. Doubek, Executive Director of the VVMF, stated that the memorial "...makes a powerful statement that this society pays tribute to Vietnam Veterans."

A MEMORIAL FOR WHOM?

Many veterans, however, seriously question how the memorial is supposed to pay them tribute. Not only does the memorial lack the traditional symbols normally found on monuments erected to veterans, but nowhere on the Vietnam veteran's memorial is there any indication that the nation is grateful or appreciative to those who fought. The prologue inscribed before the list of honor states simply:

In honor of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in Vietnam. The names of those who gave their lives, and of those who remain missing, are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.

This inscription fails even to include the minimal language of the law authorizing the memorial to be in "honor and recognition." The epilogue following the names uses the same minimalist tone:

Our nation remembers the courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty of its Vietnam veterans.

These inscriptions contrast sharply with other memorials. To many veterans of the Vietnam conflict, the language of the memorial seems but one more manifestation of the fact that they are an uncomfortable reminder for many Americans of a conflict which they would like to forget.

C. L. Kammeier, Executive Director of the Marine Corps League, wrote to the VVMF: "...there appears to be a general consensus that nothing in the design represents the purpose of the commitment of those who served and survived the Vietnam experience. The [sic] 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 the main motivating factors toward their service...."

The notion that the Vietnam veteran memorial, as currently designed, is a monument only to the dead particularly offends veterans. The congressional mandate is quite clear in calling for a memorial for those "who served in Vietnam." According to VVMF guidelines for those submitting designs, however,

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 war policy, their belief in their 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.

While the phrase "served and died" might have been unintentional, other evidence also points to an intention to honor only the dead. In a article published in the Washington Post on May 25, 1977, VVME President Jan Scruggs stated: "No effort can provide compensation, of course, to the Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in Viet Nam. For them, perhaps, a national monument is in order to remind an ungrateful nation of what it has done to its sons."

Other aspects of the design also are being criticized. A principal complaint, for example, is the choice of black granite as the material for the memorial. Black normally is associated with death and dishonor. While a number of other war memorials use some black stone, it generally is for heroic figures, rising from the earth. The Vietnam veteran's memorial, however, is not just black, but also descends into the ground, further reinforcing the image of a "tomb."

Another complaint is that the memorial will be relatively inaccessible to wheelchair-bound veterans; some 75,000 Vietnam veterans are permanently disabled. When queried about this by the Army Times, Jan Scruggs stated: "I hadn't even thought of that." According to Robert Doubek, Executive Director of the VVME, artificial turf may be installed to make wheelchair access somewhat easier and at least would meet Park Service minimum requirements for access by the disabled.

Listing of the names of the dead and missing in chronological order also is being criticized. Although this may be of some symbolic value, it will make it extremely difficult for family members to locate the name of a relative. Present plans call for a directory of names in a closed pavilion near the memorial's entrance. The directory is to be in the form of a rotating card file. This means that when large numbers of visitors come to the monument, which is very likely during the summer months, there will be a great deal of inconvenience. Any mechanical breakdown in the file's mechanism, moreover, could make it impossible to look up a name. It would seem preferable to list the names alphabetically.

Other criticisms of the design include that it readily lends itself to graffiti. It also has been suggested that the memorial may present a hazard at night since visitors unfamiliar with the park might inadvertently fall off the upper level.

3

The most telling complaint is that nowhere at the memorial site will there be the Stars and Stripes, the flag under which the Vietnam veteran fought. It is on this issue more than any other that the veterans seeking changes seem to agree. As C. L. Kammeier stated in his letter to the VVMF:

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 suggest that your committee make every effort to include the flag in a suggested modification to the current design, or 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.

The extent and vehemence of the opposition to the design selected raises questions about the process of the selection. One brochure used by the VVMF to solicit entries for the design competition states: "It was the longest war in our nation's history, and the most unpopular. Not since the Civil War has any issue so divided Americans. Although many of our present problems such as inflation and lack of confidence in our institutions have been attributed to the war, the average citizen has eliminated it from his consciousness. Any discussions of Vietnam tend to recall the bitter and seemingly unresolvable debate over whether the U.S. should have become involved militarily in Southeast Asia and subsequently how the war was conducted."

The brochure goes on to describe the experiences of the Vietnam veteran as "horror, bitterness, boredom, heat, exhaustion, and death" and states "because of inequities in the draft system, the brunt of dangerous service fell upon the young, often the socially and economically disadvantaged." It is not until the fourth paragraph that the brochure discusses the memorial. And there the emphasis is on the negative aspects of the Vietnam conflict, ending with what is surely, at best, an extremely questionable statement: "The failure of the nation to honor them only extends the national tragedy of our involvement in Vietnam."

Ironically, after thus restating most of the anti-war charges, and describing the conflict as a national tragedy, the brochure adds that "The memorial will make no political statement regarding the war or its conduct." Many veterans, however, regard the lack of any statement about the role of the American serviceman in defending the freedom of the Vietnamese people as a political statement of the strongest kind: a statement that their war was a meaningless sacrifice. It is this, perhaps which triggers the most strong feelings about the memorial. Given the rhetoric of the brochure, it is understandable why the designs entered conveyed a negative feeling about the Vietnam conflict.

Throughout the materials for those submitting designs and on which the jury was to make its selection, an anti-heroic theme was stressed. Is it surprising that an anti-heroic design was selected? To make matters worse, not a single Vietnam veteran sat on the selection jury. Indeed the jury contained at least one anti-war activist, and several members were strongly opposed to the war.

Had there been a broader participation by Vietnam veterans, the anti-heroic nature of the design might have been modified, or even rejected. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the selection is that rather than fulfilling the goal that "the memorial will begin a healing process, a reconciliation of the grievous divisions wrought by the war," it has added yet another element of controversy to one of the most controversial episodes in our history.

Milton R. Copulos
Policy Analyst

Milton R. Copulos is a disabled veteran of two tours of duty in Vietnam where he served with elements of the 25th Infantry Division. He holds the Bronze Star Medal among other decorations.



Marine Corps League

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

Incorporated by an Act of Congress

LT Gen John A. Lejeune
Founder

January 4, 1982

The Honorable
Henry J. Hyde
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

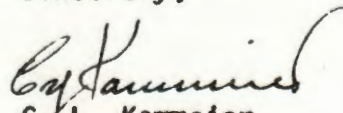
Dear Mr. Hyde,

I certainly appreciate the data you sent relative to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. As the only military / veterans organization that has taken a solid position in opposition to the selected design to date, the response from among our members and others has been totally supportive. There has not been one criticism of our position to date. One supporter seems to have done an exceptionally fine job in summing up the essence of the problem by writing, "The project seems to carry with it an air of rushing the thing through; almost thoughtless in its haste. I hope your group will continue to raise questions about the very assumptions on which this memorial is going forward."

Enclosed are several items which you may find of additional interest, and we certainly appreciate your initiative toward assuring the occurrence of a correct and fitting memorial which will truly honor all who served in the Vietnam conflict.

With every best wish for the New Year.

Sincerely,


C. L. Kammeier
Executive Director

Encls

ONCE A MARINE. ALWAYS A MARINE™

HENRY J. HYDE
9th DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY
BANKING, FINANCE AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540
(202) 512-6100

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

I thought this
material would
interest you —
Cordially
Henry Hyde

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. Spreiengren, 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

Draft

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~~ memorial from representing our Nation's public statement about men and women who deserve far better from us.

undignifying

Sincerely,

Henry J. Hyde



Patrick Buchanan

An insulting memorial

WASHINGTON—On the first of March, just two months away, ground will be broken on the Washington Mall to construct—purportedly to honor the veterans of Viet Nam—a memorial that will be a mockery of the sacrifices of those who served, “a wailing wall for future antidraft and antinuclear demonstrations.”

This is the hard view of former Marine platoon leader James Webb Jr., author of “Fields of Fire,” who resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Fund, to protest the memorial design. It is apparently the view as well of Adm. James Stockdale, one of the three American prisoners of war awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, who likewise resigned. It is the view of the Marine Corps League, which has withdrawn its support for the memorial as insulting and denigrating those who came home from Viet Nam and those who did not.

Yet, as this is written, funds continue to trickle in to the VVMF. Unless there is some form of national protest, this final national outrage will be perpetrated against the memory of the Viet Nam veteran.

Here is how it came about.

IN 1980, CONGRESS commissioned a Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Fund to design and build, with private capital, a suitable memorial on the Mall to “honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Viet Nam War.”

Ross Perot, the Texas businessman who has contributed much to the veterans’ cause, came forward with most of the funding, including the funds necessary to conduct a national competition on the memorial design. He was promised that the result, while not glorifying war, would do honor to those who went.

When the competition was completed, many veterans were stunned at the outcome. The winner was Maya Ying Lin, a Yale architectural student, who had designed a memorial not to the veterans, but only to the dead.

Her winning design consists of two walls of over 200 feet each, starting at ground level, and converging at an angle of 135 degrees—10 feet below the ground.

The American flag under which the veterans fought was not to fly over the memorial in the

mentioned; the walls would be black granite, not white marble, and upon them would be inscribed the names of the 57,000 who died—in the chronological order of their deaths.

The “purpose” of this memorial, wrote the New Republic, is “to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all . . . To treat the Viet Nam dead like some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000.”

Ross Perot took one look at the winning design and washed his hands of it.

How did it happen that the VVMF could settle upon a ditch on the Mall and a black Wall of Shame as fitting memorial to those who served?

RELATIVELY SIMPLE. Not a single Viet Nam veteran served on the judging panel that selected Miss Lin’s design. No Viet Nam veteran was allowed to serve on a panel which contained several members outspokenly hostile to the national effort to stop North Viet Nam’s conquest of the South; one member allegedly had a long association with the American Communist Party.

If this trench is dug, and those black granite walls are sunk into the earth of the Mall, those 57,000 war dead, whose names will be inscribed in perpetuity, will be conscripted again and again at rallies on behalf of causes of the selfsame people who mocked their sacrifices while they lived and helped to cancel their achievements after they died.

That trench would be a permanent political statement endorsing the view of the American Left: that the Viet Nam veterans fought and died in a worthless cause.

Already, according to Tom Carhart, twice-wounded platoon leader with the 101st Airborne who is mobilizing opposition to this “black gash of sorrow and shame,” relatives of the war dead are coming forward to keep the names of their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons off the granite slabs.

The hour is late, but not too late for urgent appeals to Congress and, especially, the President, whose secretary of the Interior must approve the digging. The most persuasive voices that could be raised would surely be those of the veterans themselves, rising in angry protest against this last, final exploitation of their fallen.



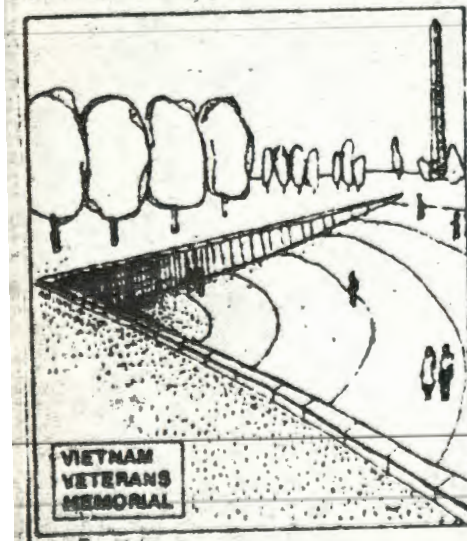
Reassessing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

By JAMES H. WEBB JR.

I, like many Vietnam veterans I have spoken to, face a Hobson's choice with respect to the proposed Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Having served on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's National Sponsoring Committee, and having also worked on Capitol Hill to help gain passage of the authorizing resolution, I want very much to see a memorial on the Mall. On the other hand, I believe the memorial chosen through the recent design competition is, as other detractors have maintained, a nihilistic statement that does not render honor to those who served.

In 1980 the Congress authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) to erect with private funds a memorial that would "honor and recognize the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war." The fund, which was the brainchild of a small group of Washington-based Vietnam veterans, held a nationwide design competition, with jurors selected on the basis of their eminence in the artistic and architectural community.

The winning design, which the fund proposes to build in Constitution Gardens just off the mall in time for Veterans Day 1982,



consists of two black walls, joining at a 135-degree angle; with one wall pointing toward the Lincoln Memorial and one toward the Washington Monument. The top of the memorial will remain at ground level, while the base will recede into the earth to a depth of 10 feet where the two walls join. On the walls will be the names of those who perished in the war, listed chronologically, supposedly in the order they fell. There will be no flag, no images indicative of war. The original design did not carry the word "Vietnam," though now a short inscription is apparently planned where the walls meet. It will be, as writer and Vietnam veteran Al Santoli mentioned to me, "a place to go and be depressed."

What is one to do? Is any memorial better than no memorial? At what point does a piece of architecture cease being a memorial to service and instead become a mockery of that service, a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrators? And most importantly, how did this travesty, this unwinnable paradox, come about?

It is important to make one clarification. The dissatisfaction with the proposed design is not the product of the far right, which has been panned in some recent articles as wanting to see a Vietnam era update of the Iwo Jima memorial, nor is it the product of a few disgruntled contestants in the design competition. The issue is whether this design meets the congressional mandate to "honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Vietnam war." All this talk of a memorial "suitably capturing the national feeling about Vietnam," whatever that is and whatever else it might be 10 or 100 years from now, is secondary to that mandated purpose. If it does, fine. But it must first honor and recognize those who served.

The present design does neither. First, it is a memorial only to the dead. Maya Lin, its designer, has been very clear on this point, stating that "this memorial is not meant as a memorial to the individual, but rather as a memorial to the men and women who died during the war, as a whole."

The New Republic magazine took umbrage at this conception of the memorial. "Its purpose," the magazine said, "is to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all. It is an unfortunate choice of memorial To treat the Vietnam dead like the victims of some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000 It is surely an excess of revisionist zeal."

A memorial devoid of embellishment, which will take up almost 200 yards of the Capitol Mall to list the names of the dead on a long black wall, violates the congressional mandate, and also violates the repeated assurances given early supporters by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. In addition to me, Admiral James B. Stockdale, Medal of Honor winner and the dean of the American prisoners of war, has resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Fund for so long as this design prevails.

Businessman Ross Perot, who provided nearly all of the funding for the memorial project from its inception in 1979 until the design for this memorial was chosen, including the funds for the design competition itself, quietly withdrew upon seeing the winning design. Mr. Perot, a Naval Academy graduate who has been widely active in projects that recognize the positive achievements of servicemen and veterans, had been repeatedly assured by the Fund's directors that the monument would not glorify war, but would honor the dead while giving primary emphasis to recognizing the heroic service of those who fought and returned. Manifestly, it does not.

Those who support the design argue, on being confronted with such dissent, that sour grapes are inevitable, that the design competition was the most extensive in history, and that the design itself is

neutral, allowing each observer to make his own conclusion about the war and those who died. But this design should not be neutral. We are invading for all time the privacy of those who perished in the war by publishing their names on the memorial, and this should not be done except in the most affirmative sense of honor and recognition.

Architectural understatement is hardly called for when we are dealing with the heroic and honorable loss of life. If citizens and international visitors wish to reach a conclusion regarding the American involvement in Vietnam while studying the memorial, it should begin with that premise. Thus, if there were to be sour grapes, the cries should have been that there was too much honor. If that is possible, rather than not enough.

One of the most unfortunate and moving testimonies to this point came from the widow of a fellow Marine, a man whom I deeply respected and fondly remember. No supporter of the war herself, she likened the blackness, the lack of ornamentation, the very emptiness of this design to the reaction she had upon seeing the ovens at Dachau. No honor there, but rather a rubbing of the world's face into the grisly shame of the deaths. "It would be better to not have a memorial at all," she concluded.

How could such a design have prevailed? It is true that there were more entries in this competition than any other in history. But through what filter did they pass? Who decided on the winner? When the winner was announced, I called the memorial fund office and asked whether a Vietnam veteran had been on the judging panel. I was told, astoundingly, that no Vietnam veterans were considered qualified, though it is traditional in such competitions for a layperson directly concerned with the project to sit as a judge, to provide a balance. Later, the VVMF officially stated that "a factor militating against a Vietnam veteran 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."

A Desire to Avoid Any Symbol

There have been charges and countercharges regarding the antiwar activities of several members of the jury. At a minimum, it is clear that there were members who had been bitterly opposed to the war, and the winning design seems to reflect a desire to avoid any symbol or statement that would put the war or those who fought it in an affirmative light. It should be remembered that the winning design, when chosen, did not even have the word

"Vietnam" on it, nor did it say anything whatsoever about those who had served. From the results of the competition, the judges undoubtedly agreed with William Greider's recent perception in the Washington Post, supporting the proposed design, that "our shared memories of that war do not include any suitably heroic images which a sculptor could convert to stone or bronze."

Most Vietnam veterans who watched the daily sacrifices of their peers in combat would quickly disagree with such a view of the "honor and recognition" that is their due, and the lack of this affirmative viewpoint is demonstrable in the winning design. As the descendant of any man who fought for the Confederacy can assure you, it is not necessary for a nation to have won a war in order for its soldiers to have fought heroically. The Vietnam veteran deserves a memorial that can make this same distinction.

In the interest of compromise, those who oppose the present design have asked that it be made white, above ground, and have a flag at the juncture of the two walls. The VVMF has the power to make such changes, with very little damage to the process by which they arrived at the design itself. Should they not, perhaps the public should reject the design by refusing to pay for it. Since this memorial is to be built with private funds, it should thus reflect the judgment of those who make its construction possible. One hopes that contributors would not hasten in their good intentions to honor those who served, and in the end bankroll a subtle but real denigration.

Mr. Webb was a Marine rifle platoon commander in Vietnam and is the author of two novels, "Fields of Fire" and "A Sense of Honor." Until recently he was minority counsel to the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 18, 1982

TO: MARTIN ANDERSON
FROM: DANNY BOGGS *DB*
RE: Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Issue:

Should any steps be taken to prevent approval of the current design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as proposed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund?

Background:

Congress, by SJR 119 (1980), authorized the construction, with private funds, of a memorial to Vietnam veterans, to be erected at Constitution Gardens on the Mall. The statute provides that the National Park Service, among other groups, must give its approval to the proposed memorial within 90 days of submission of final plans. NPS must also certify the financial ability of the group to carry out construction before final authority is given.

As a result of substantial controversy over the chosen design, Secretary Watt has indicated that he would take his responsibilities under the statute seriously, and wrote to the head of the VVMF asking for a prompt finalization of plans so that he could review them. (It may be argued that the plans have already been submitted and the 90-day period has already run. However, the plans have been changed significantly since original submission, and a legal appeal to this argument would probably fail.)

Last Thursday, Watt met the proponents of the memorial, but no resolution was reached. He characterized their presentation as "impressive," but also indicated that it would be "a sad day when 'artistic freedom' controls what America should stand for." He inquired as to White House desires on this matter, and appeared quite willing to cooperate in whatever course of action is chosen.

Thirty-one Republican Congressmen have written a letter in opposition to the current design, and a letter from numerous Senators is expected. At the same time, a number of prominent conservative figures have continued in support of the Memorial, including James Jackson Kilpatrick, General Westmoreland, and Bob Hope. (See Attachment 1)

Discussion:

The controversy over the design has included two major elements.

(1) The physical design itself. The memorial will be basically black, recessed into the earth, and the primary motif is a list of the killed and missing.

(2) The inscription and accoutrements. As originally presented, according to some, the memorial would not have mentioned the name of the war involved, contained no flag, no inscription of honor or gratitude.

As the design was revealed, many Vietnam veterans felt that "their" memorial had been hijacked by people of a basically anti-war persuasion. Numerous requests for changes were made. Some of these changes were addressed, but in such a grudging fashion as to reinforce the notion that honoring either the wishes or the persons of the veterans themselves was very far from the thoughts of the VVMF leadership. The opposition is now quite vocal and well organized, as evidenced by the letters cited above, the withdrawal from sponsorship by Ross Perot, James Webb, and other original supporters, and plans for suits by relatives of deceased soldiers to prevent their names from being included in the monument.

On the other hand, many feel that no disrespect has been intended, that the final design is a moving and artistic tribute, and that a political struggle over the meaning of Vietnam is being waged on both sides. Some of the critics have indicated that their concerns could be allayed if the memorial were "white, above ground, and with a flag." It would seem that "above ground" would be the most difficult to alter, while adding a flag would be the easiest.

It does seem to me that a memorial which is taken as offensive by most of those it is designed to honor is both futile and unseemly. At the same time, it is unclear if that is the view of the majority of veterans. Opponents of the current design have offered to have a neutral poll commissioned and to abide by the expressed desire of the majority of veterans. The VVMF has apparently refused. Perot has announced he will fund a poll somewhat along these lines.

Options:

(1) Kill the current design, by Park Service disapproval. This might well kill any national memorial for many years or forever. The fate of the FDR Memorial is instructive. Controversy over design has meant that no memorial has ever been built. At a minimum, new legislation would probably be required, and any future design would probably invite vigorous attack from those who support the current one. This would also cause at least some political furor, as well as undoubtedly drawing the President into expressing, directly or indirectly, some opinion on the design.

(2) Allow the current design to go through. This will undoubtedly also create considerable political discontent. The opponents have indicated that they will go to great lengths to stop construction, including lawsuits, probably attempts at Congressional action, and even various types of direct action.

(3) There has been some indication that the inscription and surrounding trappings could be changed enough to satisfy most of the organized opponents. The VVMF has thus far refused to be responsive. It is at least possible that with sufficient pressure, in the form of threats of non-approval, satisfactory language could be worked out. This is an option that should be seriously explored, as a way out of the all-or-nothing controversy created by a choice of either Options 1 or 2.

Very recently there appears to have been some additional willingness to negotiate on the part of the memorial supporters. For example, in a Wall Street Journal piece last Thursday, Jan Scruggs, the President of the VVMF, indicated "we favor having an American flag flying at the site." This could indicate greater willingness to be accommodating, now that significant opposition has been aroused.

The inscription has also been a point of controversy that opponents indicate could be a part of changes that would allow a suitable resolution. The current language includes a Prologue:

In honor of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in Vietnam. The names of those who gave their lives, and of those who remain missing, are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.

The Epilogue contains the following words:

Our nation remembers the courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty of its Vietnam veterans.

This has been criticized as lacking any expression of recognition, gratitude, or true sense of appreciation or honor, that it recognizes only death, not the ideals of "Duty, Honor, Country."

Recommendation:

I would recommend that primary attention be given to Option 3. Watt could meet now with opponents, as he has with the proponents, and attempt to reach some compromise on the wording and trappings. If that fails, Options 1 and 2 can be addressed.

A Memorial Ditch on the Mall

Patrick J. Buchanan

On the first of March, just two months away, ground will be broken on the Mall to construct—purportedly to honor the veterans of Vietnam—a memorial that will be a mockery of the sacrifices of those who served,



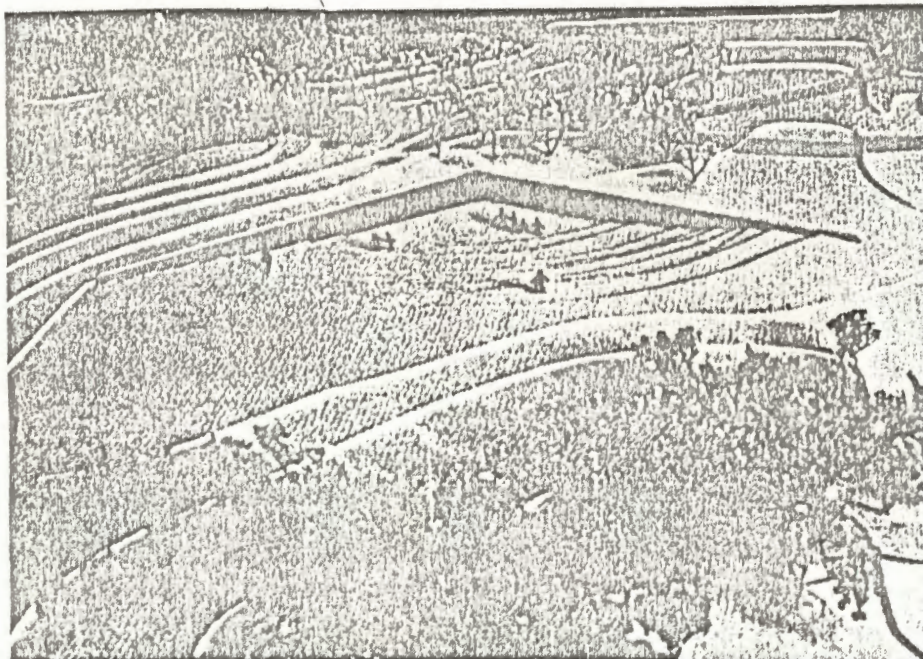
"a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrations."

That is the hard view of former Marine platoon leader James Webb Jr., author of "Fields of Fire," who resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, to protest the memorial design. It is apparently the view as well of Adm. James Stockdale, one of the three American prisoners of war awarded the Congressional medal of honor, who likewise resigned. It is the view of the Marine Corps League, which has withdrawn its support for the memorial as insulting and denigrating those who came home from Vietnam and those who did not.

Yet, as this is written, funds continue to trickle in to the VVMF. Unless there is some form of national protest, this final national outrage will be perpetrated against the memory of the Vietnam veteran.

Here is how it came about.

In 1980, Congress commissioned a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to design and build, with private capital, a suitable memorial on the Mall to "honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Vietnam War."



Ross Perot, the Texas businessman who has contributed much to the veterans' cause, came forward with most of the funding, including the funds necessary to conduct a national competition on the memorial design. He was promised that the result, while not glorifying war, would do honor to those who went.

When the competition was completed, many veterans were stunned at the outcome. The winner was Maya Ying Lin, a Yale architectural student, who had designed a memorial not to the veterans, but only to the dead.

Her winning design consists of two walls of over 200 feet each, starting at ground level, and converging at an angle of 135 degrees—10 feet below the ground.

The American flag under which the veterans fought was not to fly over the memorial in the original design; the word Vietnam was nowhere mentioned; the walls would be black granite, not white marble, and upon them would be inscribed the names of the 57,000 who died—in the chronological order of their deaths.

The "purpose" of this memorial, wrote the New Republic, is "to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all . . . To treat the Vietnam dead like some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000."

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How did it happen that the VVMF

could settle upon a ditch on the Mall and a black Wall of Shame as fitting memorial to those who served?

Relatively simple. Not a single Vietnam veteran served on the judging panel that selected Miss Lin's design. No Vietnam veteran was *allowed* to serve on a panel which contained several members outspokenly hostile to the national effort to stop North Vietnam's conquest of the South; one member allegedly had a long association with the American Communist Party.

If this trench is dug, and those black granite walls are sunk into the earth of the Mall, those 57,000 war dead, whose names will be inscribed in perpetuity, will be conscripted again and again at rallies on behalf of causes of the self-same people who mocked their sacrifices while they lived and helped to cancel their achievements after they died. That trench would be a permanent political statement endorsing the view of the American left: that the Vietnam veterans fought and died in a worthless cause.

Already, according to Tom Carhart, twice-wounded platoon leader with the 101st Airborne who is mobilizing opposition to this "black gash of sorrow and shame," relatives of the war dead are coming forward to keep the names of their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons off the granite slabs.

The hour is late; but not too late for urgent appeals to Congress and, especially, the President, whose secretary of the Interior must approve the digging. The most persuasive voices that could be raised would surely be those of the veterans themselves, rising in angry protest against this last, final exploitation of their fallen comrades.

HENRY J. HYDE
6TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
JUDICIARY
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Bill Gubbin

1203 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4561

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

January 12, 1982

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 unedifying memorial from representing our Nation's public statement about men and women who deserve far better from us.

Sincerely,

Henry J. Hyde
Henry J. Hyde

HJH:fw

cc: Honorable James Watt

Philip Crane

PHILIP CRANE, ILLINOIS

Robert J. Lagomarsino

ROBERT LAGOMARSINO, CALIFORNIA

L.A. Skip Bafalis

L.A. (SKIP) BAFALIS, FLORIDA

Bobbi Fiedler

BOBBI FIEDLER, CALIFORNIA

Charles F. Dougherty

CHARLES DOUGHERTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Ed Derwinski

EDWARD DERWINSKI, ILLINOIS

George Wortley

GEORGE WORTLEY, NEW YORK

Bill Goodling

WILLIAM GOODLING, PENNSYLVANIA

Tom Tauke

THOMAS TAUKE, IOWA

Will Dickinson

WILLIAM DICKINSON, ALABAMA

Hank Brown

HANK BROWN, COLORADO

Bill Emerson

BILL EMERSON, MISSOURI

Jerry Lewis

JERRY LEWIS, CALIFORNIA

Gary A. Lee

GARY LEE, NEW YORK

Clair Burgener

CLAIR BURGNER, CALIFORNIA

Doug Berenter

DOUGLAS BERENTER, NEBRASKA

McCallwell Butler

CALDWELL BUTLER, VIRGINIA

Olympia Snowe

OLYMPIA SNOWE, MAINE

Don Ritter

DON RITTER, PENNSYLVANIA

John Hiler

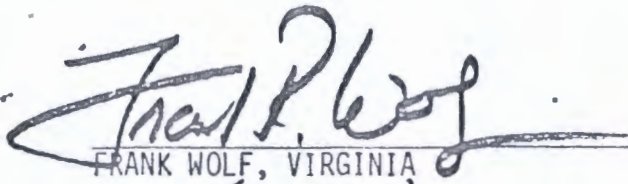
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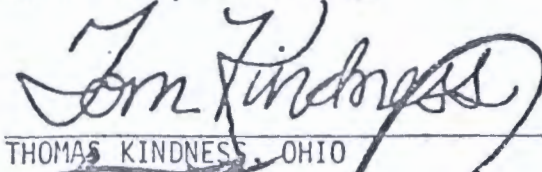
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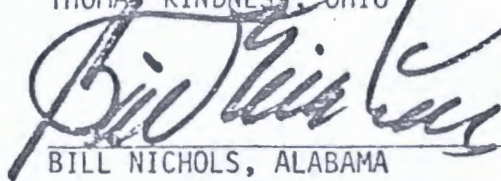
NORMAN SHUMAY, CALIFORNIA

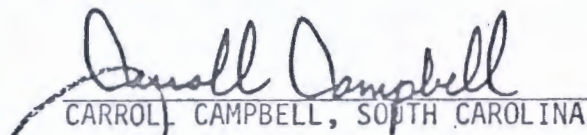
George O'Brien

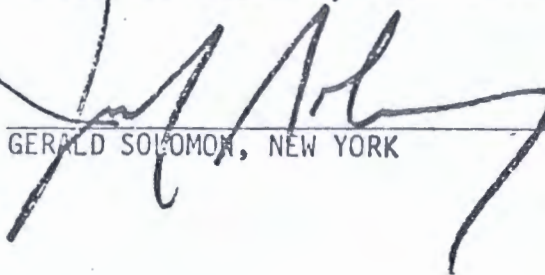
GEORGE O'BRIEN, ILLINOIS


FRANK WOLF, VIRGINIA

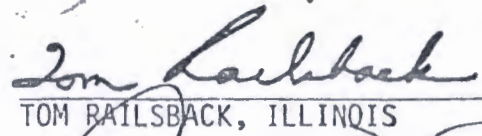

THOMAS KINDNESS, OHIO

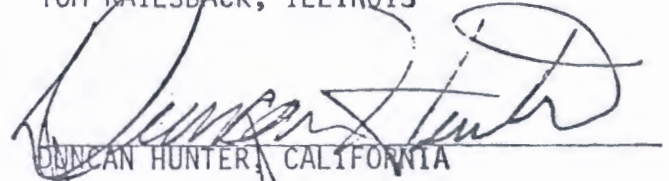

BILL NICHOLS, ALABAMA

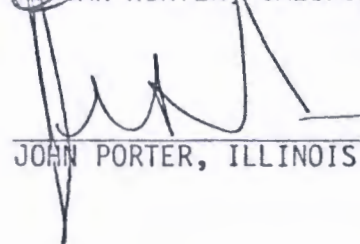

CARROLL CAMPBELL, SOUTH CAROLINA


GERALD SOLOMON, NEW YORK


DAN LUNGREN, CALIFORNIA


TOM RAILSBACK, ILLINOIS


DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA


JOHN PORTER, ILLINOIS

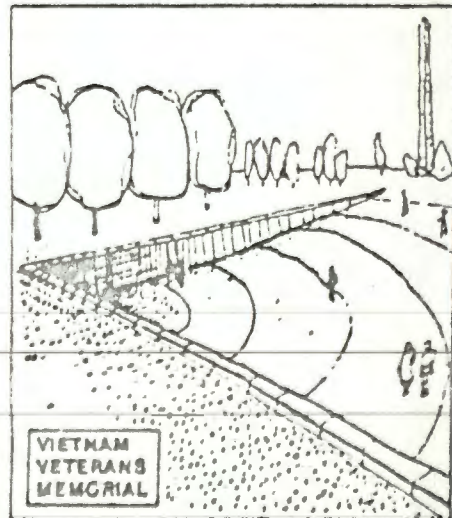
Reassessing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

By JAMES H. WEBB JR.

I, like many Vietnam veterans I have spoken to, face a Hobson's choice with respect to the proposed Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Having served on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's National Sponsoring Committee, and having also worked on Capitol Hill to help gain passage of the authorizing resolution, I want very much to see a memorial on the Mall. On the other hand, I believe the memorial chosen through the recent design competition is, as other detractors have maintained, a nihilistic statement that does not render honor to those who served.

In 1980 the Congress authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) to erect with private funds a memorial that would "honor and recognize the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war." The fund, which was the brainchild of a small group of Washington-based Vietnam veterans, held a nationwide design competition, with jurors selected on the basis of their eminence in the artistic and architectural community.

The winning design, which the fund proposes to build in Constitution Gardens just off the mall in time for Veterans Day 1982,



consists of two black walls, joining at a 135-degree angle, with one wall pointing toward the Lincoln Memorial and one toward the Washington Monument. The top of the memorial will remain at ground level, while the base will recede into the earth to a depth of 10 feet where the two walls join. On the walls will be the names of those who perished in the war, listed chronologically, supposedly in the order they fell. There will be no flag, no images indicative of war. The original design did not carry the word "Vietnam," though now a short inscription is apparently planned where the walls meet. It will be, as writer and Vietnam veteran Al Santoli mentioned to me, "a place to go and be depressed."

What is one to do? Is any memorial better than no memorial? At what point does a piece of architecture cease being a memorial to service and instead become a mockery of that service, a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrators? And most importantly, how did this travesty, this unwinnable paradox, come about?

It is important to make one clarification. The dissatisfaction with the proposed design is not the product of the far right, which has been panned in some recent articles as wanting to see a Vietnam era update of the Iwo Jima memorial, nor is it the product of a few disgruntled contestants in the design competition. The issue is whether this design meets the congressional mandate to "honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Vietnam war." All this talk of a memorial "suitably capturing the national feeling about Vietnam," whatever that is and whatever else it might be 10 or 100 years from now, is secondary to that mandated purpose. If it does, fine. But it must first honor and recognize those who served.

The present design does neither. First, it is a memorial only to the dead. Maya Lin, its designer, has been very clear on this point, stating that "this memorial is not meant as a memorial to the individual, but rather as a memorial to the men and women who died during the war, as a whole."

The New Republic magazine took umbrage at this conception of the memorial. "Its purpose," the magazine said, "is to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all. It is an unfortunate choice of memorial . . . To treat the Vietnam dead like the victims of some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000 . . . It is surely an excess of revisionist zeal."

A memorial devoid of embellishment, which will take up almost 200 yards of the Capitol Mall to list the names of the dead on a long black wall, violates the congressional mandate, and also violates the repeated assurances given early supporters by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. In addition to me, Admiral James B. Stockdale, Medal of Honor winner and the dean of the American prisoners of war, has resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Fund for so long as this design prevails.

Businessman Ross Perot, who provided nearly all of the funding for the memorial project from its inception in 1979 until the design for this memorial was chosen, including the funds for the design competition itself, quietly withdrew upon seeing the winning design. Mr. Perot, a Naval Academy graduate who has been widely active in projects that recognize the positive achievements of servicemen and veterans, had been repeatedly assured by the Fund's directors that the monument would not glorify war, but would honor the dead while giving primary emphasis to recognizing the heroic service of those who fought and returned. Manifestly, it does not.

Those who support the design argue, on being confronted with such dissent, that sour grapes are inevitable, that the design competition was the most extensive in history, and that the design itself is

"neutral," allowing each observer to make his own conclusion about the war and those who died. But this design should not be neutral. We are invading for all time the privacy of those who perished in the war by publishing their names on the memorial, and this should not be done except in the most affirmative sense of honor and recognition.

Architectural understatement is hardly called for when we are dealing with the heroic and honorable loss of life. If citizens and international visitors wish to reach a conclusion regarding the American involvement in Vietnam while studying the memorial, it should begin with that premise. Thus, if there were to be sour grapes, the cries should have been that there was too much honor, if that is possible, rather than not enough.

One of the most unfortunate and moving testimonies to this point came from the widow of a fellow Marine, a man whom I deeply respected and fondly remember. No supporter of the war herself, she likened the blackness, the lack of ornateness, the very emptiness of this design to the reaction she had upon seeing the ovens at Dachau. No honor there, but rather a rubbing of the world's face into the grisly shame of the deaths. "It would be better to not have a memorial at all," she concluded.

How could such a design have prevailed? It is true that there were more entries in this competition than any other in history. But through what filter did they pass? Who decided on the winner? When the winner was announced, I called the memorial fund office and asked whether a Vietnam veteran had been on the judging panel. I was told, astoundingly, that no Vietnam veterans were considered qualified, though it is traditional in such competitions for a layperson directly concerned with the project to sit as a judge, to provide a balance. Later, the VVMF officially stated that "a factor militating against a Vietnam veteran 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."

A Desire to Avoid Any Symbol

There have been charges and countercharges regarding the antiwar activities of several members of the jury. At a minimum, it is clear that there were members who had been bitterly opposed to the war, and the winning design seems to reflect a desire to avoid any symbol or statement that would put the war or those who fought it in an affirmative light. It should be remembered that the winning design, when

"Vietnam" on it, nor did it say anything whatsoever about those who had served. From the results of the competition, the judges undoubtedly agreed with William Greider's recent perception in the Washington Post, supporting the proposed design, that "our shared memories of that war do not include any suitably heroic images which a sculptor could convert to stone or bronze."

Most Vietnam veterans who watched the daily sacrifices of their peers in combat would quickly disagree with such a view of the "honor and recognition" that is their due, and the lack of this affirmative viewpoint is demonstrable in the winning design. As the descendant of any man who fought for the Confederacy can assure you, it is not necessary for a nation to have won a war in order for its soldiers to have fought heroically. The Vietnam veteran deserves a memorial that can make this same distinction.

In the interest of compromise, those who oppose the present design have asked that it be made white, above ground, and have a flag at the juncture of the two walls. The VVMF has the power to make such changes, with very little damage to the process by which they arrived at the design itself. Should they not, perhaps the public should reject the design by refusing to pay for it. Since this memorial is to be built with private funds, it should thus reflect the judgment of those who make its construction possible. One hopes that contributors would not hasten in their good intentions to honor those who served, and in the end bankroll a subtle but real denigration.

Mr. Webb was a Marine rifle platoon commander in Vietnam and is the author of two novels, "Fields of Fire" and "A Sense of Honor." Until recently he was minority counsel to the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

January 13, 1982

MEMORANDUM

TO: General Dougherty
FROM: Ben Catlin
SUBJECT: Ad Hoc meeting January 12, 1982

The monthly meeting of military/Veterans associations (Ad-Hoc) was held in the VFW Building on Tuesday, January 12, 1982. Twelve Associations were represented - AFA, AUSA, ASC, AL, MCL, NAUS, NCOA, NERA, ROA, REA, TROA and VFW.

The meeting started with a briefing by the DoD Federal Voting Assistance office on the absentee voting program and the need to encourage military personnel to vote.

During the discussion portion of the meeting, the VFW indicated that the interim report of the Presidential Manpower Task Force dealt only with registration and the draft and will probably not be made public.

There was a major discussion on the Vietnam Veterans memorial. Almost all the Associations felt they had been "used" by the artistic community and they would like to withdraw support for the project. Ross Perrot, one of the early supporters, has commissioned a major study of Vietnam Veterans' opinions on the memorial. All agreed to await the results of this study before publicly changing their position. The Vietnam Veterans of America (the group which sent four veterans to Hanoi recently), has sent a letter to Associations and individuals, asking for support and contributions. In their literature, they indicate Hanoi will only negotiate with them on POW and MIA issues. This will probably cause problems.

The next Ad Hoc meeting will be on 9 February in the AUSA building.

3.

January 18, 1982

MEMORANDUM

TO: General Dougherty

FROM: Ben Catlin

SUBJECT: Combined National Veterans' Assn. Briefings,
Friday, January 15

Rear Admiral Alan C. Paulson, Deputy Director DIA, and Ross Perot were the speakers. Twenty people representing twelve associations attended. The associations represented were: AFA, AMVETS, Jewish War Vets, Legion of Valor, MCL, NAUS, NCOA, NERA, National League of Families, POW/MIA's, TROA, and VFW.

Admiral Paulson stated DIA is not only interested in POWs and MIAs but committed to obtaining information on the 2,494 personnel who are still unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam war. He has fifteen people working on this project full time; including three stationed in Thailand. In addition, the service attaches help whenever needed and quick reaction teams are trained and ready if there is any chance of bringing personnel out alive.

There have been 390 first person sightings of POWs. Eighteen were for the Marine Pvt. Garwood who later came out and twenty were for an American fisherman named Gay who had lived in Vietnam for twenty years and later returned to the US. It is not illogical to believe that some more of the sightings are valid.

His agency has also been working with a North Vietnamese mortician who handled all foreign remains (N. Vietnamese do not use morticians for their personnel). This mortician reported many remains in wooden boxes in a warehouse near Hanoi. He worked with the French also after North Vietnam was separated from France. His polygraph test indicated he was telling the truth.

State Department cooperation and assistance has not been good. (Ross Perot said to let him know of any problems with the State Department as he had worked for three years on the POW/MIA issue with a Col/Gen who was assigned to the State Dept. - the Col/Gen's name was Haig.)

Admiral Paulson closed with the remark that the North Vietnamese had used the same POW and MIA negotiating techniques with the French after the French-Indo China war.

Mr. Perot briefed the group on his opinion and recent action regarding the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. He has commissioned the Gallop organization to conduct a poll of Vietnam veterans and POW's to get their reaction to the proposed Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. In his judgement, this action is necessary as a result of the controversy and increasing opposition from individuals and groups. Mr. Perot stated he has no preference. He just wants it to satisfy the Vietnam veterans and he "doesn't care if the art world doesn't like it." If necessary, he will be happy to pay for redesigning the memorial and he will pay for any black marble already ordered.

Jerry Dalton will work with the Gallop organization and will provide associations with copies of the questions to be asked.

dk/BC

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ben", written over a horizontal line.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FROM THE DESK OF:

KARNA SMALL
Director, Media Relations and Planning

FYI: Morton

I know we discussed this many weeks ago -- but I'm still hoping something can be done to stop this project. I know that Jim Watt is "taking a 2nd look" but he's also taking some heat...



A Memorial Ditch on the Mall

Patrick J. Buchanan

On the first of March, just two months away, ground will be broken on the Mall to construct—purportedly to honor the veterans of Vietnam—a memorial that will be a mockery of the sacrifices of those who served, “a wailing wall for future anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrations.”



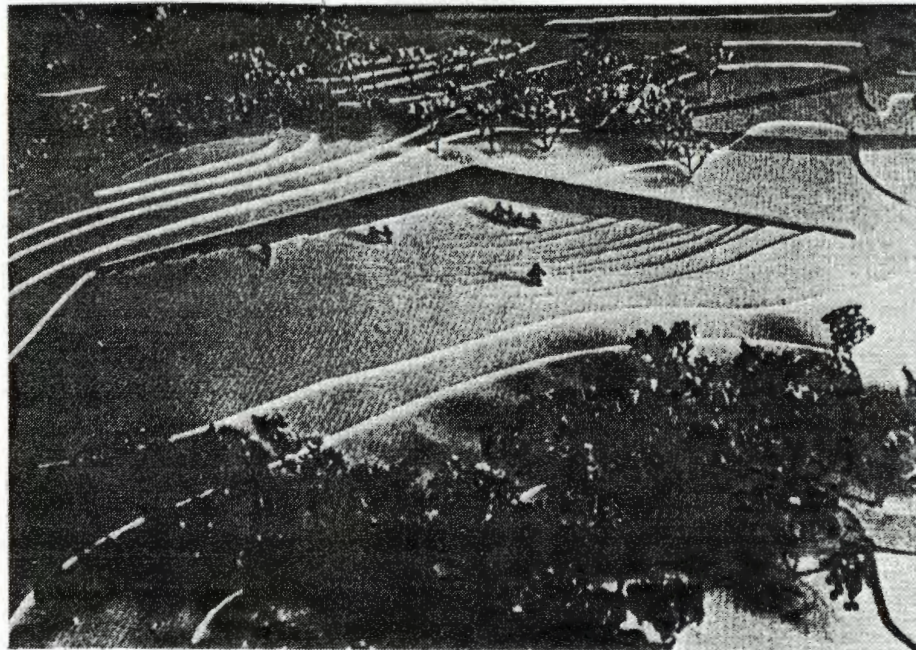
That is the hard view of former Marine platoon leader James Webb Jr., author of

“Fields of Fire,” who resigned from the National Sponsoring Committee of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, to protest the memorial design. It is apparently the view as well of Adm. James Stockdale, one of the three American prisoners of war awarded the Congressional medal of honor, who likewise resigned. It is the view of the Marine Corps League, which has withdrawn its support for the memorial as insulting and denigrating those who came home from Vietnam and those who did not.

Yet, as this is written, funds continue to trickle in to the VVMF. Unless there is some form of national protest, this final national outrage will be perpetrated against the memory of the Vietnam veteran.

Here is how it came about.

In 1980, Congress commissioned a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to design and build, with private capital, a suitable memorial on the Mall to “honor and recognize the men and women . . . who served in the Vietnam War.”



Ross Perot, the Texas businessman who has contributed much to the veterans' cause, came forward with most of the funding, including the funds necessary to conduct a national competition on the memorial design. He was promised that the result, while not glorifying war, would do honor to those who went.

When the competition was completed, many veterans were stunned at the outcome. The winner was Maya Ying Lin, a Yale architectural student, who had designed a memorial not to the veterans, but only to the dead.

Her winning design consists of two walls of over 200 feet each, starting at ground level, and converging at an angle of 135 degrees—10 feet below the ground.

The American flag under which the veterans fought was not to fly over the memorial in the original design; the word Vietnam was nowhere mentioned; the walls would be black granite, not white marble, and upon them would be inscribed the names of the 57,000 who died—in the chronological order of their deaths.

The “purpose” of this memorial, wrote the *New Republic*, is “to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaninglessness of it all . . . To treat the Vietnam dead like some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000.”

Ross Perot took one look at the winning design and washed his hands of it. How did it happen that the VVMF

could settle upon a ditch on the Mall and a black Wall of Shame as fitting memorial to those who served?

Relatively simple. Not a single Vietnam veteran served on the judging panel that selected Miss Lin's design. No Vietnam veteran was *allowed* to serve on a panel which contained several members outspokenly hostile to the national effort to stop North Vietnam's conquest of the South; one member allegedly had a long association with the American Communist Party.

If this trench is dug, and those black granite walls are sunk into the earth of the Mall, those 57,000 war dead, whose names will be inscribed in perpetuity, will be conscripted again and again at rallies on behalf of causes of the self-same people who mocked their sacrifices while they lived and helped to cancel their achievements after they died. That trench would be a permanent political statement endorsing the view of the American left: that the Vietnam veterans fought and died in a worthless cause.

Already, according to Tom Carhart, twice-wounded platoon leader with the 101st Airborne who is mobilizing opposition to this “black gash of sorrow and shame,” relatives of the war dead are coming forward to keep the names of their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons off the granite slabs.

The hour is late; but not too late for urgent appeals to Congress and, especially, the President, whose secretary of the Interior must approve the digging. The most persuasive voices that could be raised would surely be those of the veterans themselves, rising in angry protest against this last, final exploitation of their fallen comrades.