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— Cheryl - 389-3775

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Appointment with

Robert Nimmo

10:30 am Tues/for 15 mins

Lobby

Diplomat Resort

Hotel/Hollywood Fla.

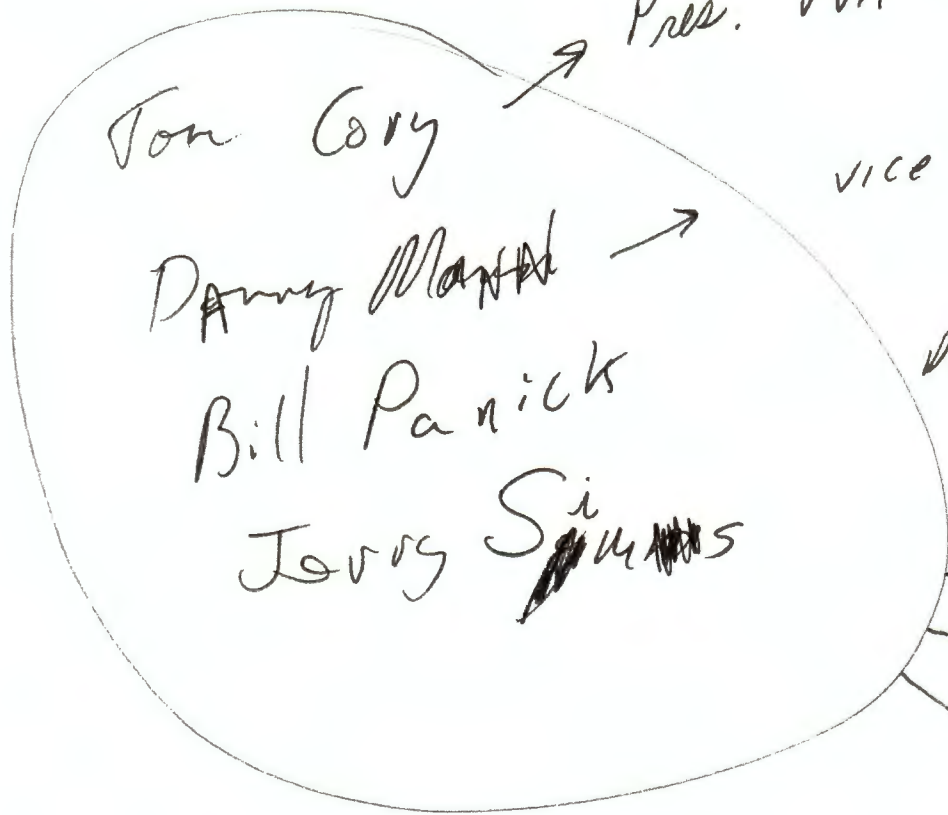
Chris Noel →

305-833-3059

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PL 97-72

Pres. VVA - Palm Beach County,
Fla.



vice Pres.

Directors

Directors





Telephone
202-543-2239

NEWS Release

Washington Memorial Building
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002



"THE VOICE OF TWO AND ONE HALF MILLION MEN AND WOMEN OF THE VFW AND ITS AUXILIARY"

FOR RELEASE:

IMMEDIATELY
(18 DECEMBER 1981)

*file
Vietnam
Veterans
of
America*

VFW LEADER CAUTIONS VETS ON VISIT TO HANOI

WASHINGTON, D. C. -- Mr. Arthur J. Fellwock, National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, today cautioned veterans across America, and most directly the more than 500,000 Vietnam veterans in the 1.9 million member VFW, as to the probable results of a trip to Hanoi being undertaken by Vietnam veteran Robert Muller and his associates.

"While the stated trip objectives, long fought for by the VFW -- new information on Agent Orange and about our POW/MIAs -- are unexceptional, certain aspects of this trip to Communist Hanoi should be borne in mind:

"(1) I am deeply concerned that the Muller group is setting itself up for a Communist Holiday Season propaganda barrage;

"(2) contrary to the impression left by some press accounts, this trip is not being officially sponsored by the U. S. State Department. It is being paid for by Penthouse Magazine which will, of course, exploit the resultant publicity;

"(3) the Muller group does not plan a visit to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Hawaii for a briefing on POW/MIA matters; and,

"(4) while Muller and his group were briefed by the National League of Families on POW/MIAs, no offer was made to the League to include a National League member in the visiting party. The Muller visit is neither endorsed nor supported by the National League."

(MORE)

The VFW leader concluded by noting that "of course the Vietnamese Communist will produce pitiable, deformed 'victim' after 'victim' of the war (or a more recent traffic accident) for avid Penthouse exploitation. They may even present some remains of our honored dead; after all, there's a reported 400 sets of remains in a Hanoi warehouse.


"I hope that the Muller group, in earning some new dollars will not, however unwittingly, betray some old comrades."

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 30, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES S. ROSEBUSH

FROM: MORTON C. BLACKWELL 
SUBJECT: Request from Robert Muller

I would not recommend any other meeting in the near future for the President involving Mr. Muller or his organization.

At the time we included him in the event last year with the major veterans organizations he appeared to be making a genuine effort to be cooperative despite his radical and anti-war background. In completing that list I consulted with the major veterans organizations, all of which have been supportive of the President. There was a lukewarm consensus that it would be okay to include Mr. Muller.

Subsequently, Mr. Muller led a delegation from his organization to Hanoi where, among other activities, they laid a wreath on the tomb of Ho Chi Minh.

Since then he has been sniping at the Administration and has been at war with the major veterans organizations.

The American Legion has 2.7 million members, the VFW 1.9 million members. Mr. Muller's organization has eight thousand. His is not a major organization.

The fact that his group has resumed its radical ways drops him off our priority list.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 29, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR MORTON BLACKWELL

FROM JAMES S. ROSEBUSH 

SUBJECT VIETNAM VETS REQUEST

Could you kindly answer the attached request.

425 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10003
212 598-7100
Cable NEWSHAKES

NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Joseph Papp Producer

June 23, 1982

Ms. Muffie Brandon
Social Secretary to the White House
White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

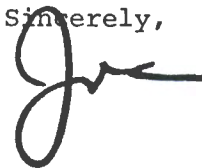
Dear Muffie:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I received from Robert Muller. I would appreciate it if you could help me arrange the appointment requested by Mr. Muller. It is my belief, that the group of Vietnam Veterans I accompanied, together with Mike Wallace, Colin Campbell of the N.Y. TIMES, and Dennis Gray from the Associated Press a few weeks ago, are making a real contribution to our country, and I think that the President would find a first hand report on this trip very useful and encouraging.

Also enclosed is the photograph just sent me from Washington. To the right of the President are Peter Noone and James Belluchi, both members of the cast of our production of THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE which performed for the children and their parents on the White House lawn Easter egg rolling event. Unfortunately I arrived too late to say hello to the President and Mrs. Reagan.

Your kind assistance would be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,



JP/jh

encls.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

329 EIGHTH STREET NE, WASHINGTON, DC 20002 ★ 202/546-3700

June 21, 1982

Mr. Joseph Papp
Producer
New York Shakespeare Festival
425 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10003

Dear Mr. Papp:

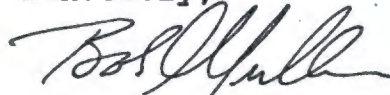
Last year I met with President Reagan as one of the leaders from the various national Veterans organizations who were invited to the White House for a briefing on matters of concern to us. At the close of our meeting, I asked the President if he would meet with me again, this time to specifically address the concerns of the Vietnam Veterans. The President assured me twice that he would meet with me and his commitment was acknowledged by numerous staff people.

I am writing to ask your help in arranging a meeting that would include the two of us and the President. I feel a meeting is necessary to review the accomplishments of our visits to Vietnam, to impress upon the President our interest in continuing to break new ground on issues of concern to the American people. The gains regarding the accounting of those MIA's and the prospect of possible additional useful scientific information concerning the consequences of exposure to Agent Orange.

The combination of our respective experiences on the two trips we've sponsored to Vietnam as well as your pre-eminent position as a representative of America's cultural community and my position as head of America's only V.A. accredited national veterans organization composed exclusively of Vietnam-era veterans enhances greatly, in my opinion, the chances for good to come out of a meeting.

I hope you will be able to lend your support in calling this matter to the attention of the appropriate people at the White House. I know you share my concern, knowing first hand as you do, the extraordinary position we have assumed between Vietnam and our country. Look forward to a successful agreement to this request.

Sincerely,



Robert O. Muller
Executive Director

ROM:ps

★ A not-for-profit national veteran's organization ★

Troubled Vietnam Veterans Gain Status

By BERNARD WEINKRAUB

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15 — It was last Thursday afternoon when Bobby Muller lifted the phone in the office of the Vietnam Veterans of America and dialed the number of Robert P. Nimmo, head of the Veterans Administration.

"I want to thank you very much for recognizing us," said Mr. Muller, executive director of the veterans group.

"Bobby, it was a pleasure," Mr. Nimmo replied. "I look forward to a constructive and positive relationship."

For Robert O. Muller, a 35-year-old former Marine lieutenant who was crippled in the Vietnam War, the agency's decision to accredit the Vietnam veterans organization marked the end of a troubled journey for a group that was formed in the mid-1970's with the vague hope of ending what it termed the oblivion and guilt suffered by many of the men and women who served in Vietnam.

On Same Basis With Others

"It means we've joined the ranks of the traditional veterans organizations," Mr. Muller said in the group's office on a bleak street in Northeast Washington. "It puts us in their ballpark and places us on somewhat equal terms in being able to raise our membership."

Specifically, the decision by Mr. Nimmo, whose comments belittling the problems of Vietnam veterans have stirred resentment, means that Mr. Muller's 8,000-member organization will receive space in the agency's regional offices. It will be allowed to go before the agency to officially represent Vietnam veterans seeking benefits.

Mr. Muller says, and others concur, that such major veterans' groups as the American Legion, with 2.7 million members, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, with 1.9 million, have kept up their membership because of their ability to "represent" veterans in such connections.

"Finally," said Mr. Muller, "we're on a far more equal footing with the traditionals."

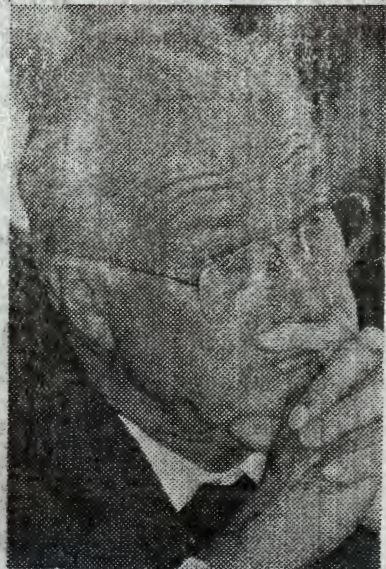
A wiry, intense, blunt-spoken man, Mr. Muller is convinced that national interest in the plight of Vietnam veterans is intertwined with the extravagant return of the 52 hostages from the American Embassy in Teheran last January.

Suddenly veterans surged into the 91 counseling centers across the nation to express rage at the contrast between the



The New York Times / Teresa Zabala

Robert O. Muller



United Press International

Robert P. Nimmo

welcome afforded the hostages and the silence and even hostility that greeted Vietnam veterans a decade earlier.

"The return of the hostages stands as the single most important event to benefit Vietnam veterans," said Mr. Muller.

"It crystallized the Vietnam veteran as an issue of contemporary concern when people compared the reception that America afforded the hostages with the lack of reception for Vietnam veterans. It made clear to many the injustice."

Beyond this, the election of President Reagan has buoyed the group somewhat, although Administration programs to aid Vietnam veterans remain hazy.

After a White House meeting between Mr. Reagan and veterans' leaders, Mr. Muller concluded, "Ronald Reagan was spontaneous enough in response to our questions for me to conclude that he's honestly sympathetic and supportive of the Vietnam veteran."

Stockman's Record Criticized

At the same July 17 meeting, however, Mr. Muller bluntly complained to Mr. Reagan about David A. Stockman, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, who had sought vainly to limit funds for storefront counseling centers. According to Mr. Muller, he told the President that "Stockman has particularly aggrieved many Vietnam veterans" because he opposed the

conflict while in college and spent the war years at Harvard Divinity School.

Mr. Reagan sat and listened, saying nothing in response, said Mr. Muller.

Together with an expected increase in membership for the Vietnam veterans group, which has offices in Washington and New York, Mr. Muller foresees substantial contributions in the next few weeks through rock concert benefits. The organization has operated on a shoestring, and most corporations have declined to contribute because, as one foundation head told Mr. Muller, "you are a legacy of Vietnam and therefore symbolic of Vietnam, and people are too nervous to deal with that."

The first benefit, by Bruce Springsteen, at the Los Angeles Sports Arena on Thursday, is expected to raise more than \$100,000 for the group. There will also be benefits by the Charlie Daniels Band Sept. 4 at Saratoga Springs Performing Arts Center in upstate New York, and by Pat Benatar, the singer, Sept. 20 in Detroit.

Mr. Muller said it was "ironic" that rock music should provide the bulk of funds for the organization. "When businesses and others have failed to rally behind our cause," he said, "for us to be helped by our own generation — remembering the divisions between those who served and those who didn't — is somewhat ironic and also most welcome as a big step towards the healing process."

July 13, 1982

*Vietnam Veterans
of
America*

Dear Mr. Papp:

Your June 23 letter to Muffie Brandon requesting an appointment with the President for Mr. Robert Muller of Vietnam Veterans of America has been forwarded to me.

Although the President would like to meet with you and also to meet again with Mr. Muller, as he did last year, unfortunately, due to the schedule to which he is committed through the coming months, we are unable at this time to arrange a meeting.

Please convey the President's regrets to Mr. Muller and his best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frederick J. Ryan, Jr.
Deputy Director
Presidential Appointments
and Scheduling

Mr. Joseph Papp
Producer
New York Shakespeare Festival
425 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10003

cc: James Rosebush - FYI
cc: Morton Blackwell - FYI

FJR:CV:vml--

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1981

Vietnam Veterans of America file copy

TO: ELIZABETH H. DOLE
FROM: MORTON C. BLACKWELL

Per your instructions yesterday, I spoke with Bob Muller of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

1. He asked (demanded) a meeting with the President by Friday evening, May 15, 1981 in order to meet a press deadline with Time Magazine.
2. He wanted the President to announce his support for the inclusion of the Vietnam Outreach centers in the Senate Budget resolution which does not contain this. The House — passed Reagan Bipartisan Budget Resolution does include funding for these centers. The Administration, by the letter we arranged from Dave Stockman to Rep. Sonny Montgomery, is committed not to fight against reinclusion of the funding for these centers in the Senate.
3. He wanted the President to publicly ~~say~~ state he wants to continue working through Joan Bernstein, Inter-Agency Task Force on Agent Orange.

I got back to Bob Muller today after having discussed him with Nick Longworth at the Veterans Administration, who said that Muller is rather thoroughly radicalized and cannot ever be satisfied. I related the following to Muller:

1. I told him that the President's schedule did not permit a meeting and photo session today *or tomorrow*.
2. I explained the administration position on the Vietnam Veterans Outreach Centers.
3. I said that our position was going to largely be determined upon advice from Presidential nominee for VA administrator, Robert Nimmo. I told Muller that Nimmo had just arrived in town yesterday and thought it better not to make long-reaching policy recommendations during this immediate transition period.
4. I told him that I knew that Nick Longworth at VA was advising us to continue working through Joan Bernstein, Inter-Agency Task Force.
5. When he asked when he might see the President, I suggested that he write me a letter about a proposed meeting, giving us more advance time.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

To
Morton

Date:

4/4

TO:

Jawa

FROM:

RED CAVANEY

Morton in this

loop too. What are

his thoughts?

Are there Feds?

Red

Mazelle Shortley

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jean Bernstein
Agent Orange
Australian Study
40,000

Findings are devastating
lellase is "innocent"

Dr. Peter Beach = Cancer

offic of Secretary HHS
Director Veterans Affairs, HHS.
Co-Ch. Under Sec. Conf. on Viet
War Nam Vets holding

Conf May 22-24

Agent Orange High on
priority. Viet Nam Conference.

WA Support to Schriber
Continued support for
task force

TO Red
PL 4/1

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO: V.K.
FROM: OPL - au
DATE: _____

The attached is for your:

Red

3/30

Information	<u>Review & Comment</u>
Direct Response	<u>Appropriate Action</u>
EHD Draft Letter	Signature
File	Other

Comments: I contacted Jodie + she is coming in for lunch tomorrow to brief me on the issues of "Orange".

The issue for EHD is whether she will recommend W.H support for the continuation of the inter-agency "Work Group" to deal with Federal response to the Problems of Agent Orange - Secty Schweiker has approved I but needs White House support. I recommend EHD gives it.

(VK)

LAW OFFICES
WALD HARKRADER & ROSS

Veterans
Agent Orange
Veterans
File

1300 NINETEENTH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

AREA CODE 202
828-1200
CABLE ADDRESS: WALRUS
TELEX (RCA): 248591 (WHR)

March 23, 1981

Honorable Elizabeth Dole
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Liddy:

I don't even know whether I have formally congratulated you on your spectacular appointment! And if I haven't, I assume you know you have my best wishes, my congratulations, and my warmest personal regards. Between the job, and Bob's recent illness you must be absolutely beside yourself! Lionel and I were really delighted that Bob came through the illness so well -- he's obviously full of his usual humorous venom which convinced me that he was really well again. If I had not been so persuaded I would have dispatched Dr. Bernstein, not with his sculptor's scalpel but with his bag of medical tricks to make sure he was alright. Please give him our very best wishes for a total and complete recovery.

How great to have Virginia back in town! Everything changes but in a way, everything stays the same. I had a wonderful lunch with J.D. and his friend Dan Oliver, General Counsel Designate of the Department of Education. It was great fun and I thoroughly enjoyed both of them.

And last, I wanted to take just one minute of your time to make sure that you or other appropriate people involved with domestic policy were aware of the existence of the Interagency Work Group on Agent Orange. Very briefly, when I was at HHS I was asked by the Secretary and Stuart Eisenstat to establish and chair a work group to deal with the government's response to the "Agent Orange" controversy. Several agencies were involved including the V.A., the DOD, EPA, DOA and of course HHS. The Work Group served to coordinate research efforts within the government and to make sure appropriate people were communicating with each other.

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WALD, HARKRADER & ROSS

Honorable Elizabeth Dole
March 23, 1981
Page Two

Many Vietnam veterans, their families and concerned members of Congress felt the government, especially the V.A. had failed to respond to this issue. I don't want to inundate you with too much information, but have enclosed two brief documents for your information: (1) a memo of mine to Secretary Schweiker and (2) a letter supporting continuing this group to Martin Anderson from Senator Cranston. I really wanted your Administration to know how effective the Group was. We made a lot of progress in de-escalating the hysteria which surrounded the controversy and conducted a rational exchange of views. All of the members of the Work Group were unusual and competent people -- for the most part they are scientists in the various agencies and departments. As you will see, it has not only coordinated existing studies but recommended and authorized additional studies, the results of which will be very helpful. We testified several times before both House and Senate Veterans Committees and were well received at all times.

The reasons for calling it to your attention is that I don't believe it can really continue to function effectively without top level support. The Secretary has already approved it but without a signal of White House support, it probably will not be able to serve the Administration so well. I have also heard from Bob Mueller, executive director of the Vietnam Veterans of America whom I met in connection with the Work Group. He will soon ask for a meeting with you to support the continuation of the Work Group. He has been in my judgment an articulate and responsible spokesman for Vietnam Veterans and their families. You will find him as I did to be knowledgeable, informed with great personal integrity.

I know that all of you must be up to your ears in a million other things and therefore this issue may not have come to your attention.

I suggested lunch for you, me and Virginia to Virginia -- I know lunch with you may have to be postponed for several years.

Love,

Jodie
Joan Z. Bernstein

JZB/bb

Enclosures



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

THE GENERAL COUNSEL

9 JAN 1981

Memorandum for the Secretary-Designate

From: Joan Z. Bernstein, General Counsel and Chair,
Interagency Work Group to Study the Possible
Long-Term Health Effects of Phenoxy Herbicides
and Contaminants

The purpose of this memorandum is to describe briefly the functions and accomplishments of the Interagency Work Group to Study the Possible Long-Term Health Effects of Phenoxy Herbicides and Contaminants and to suggest that an early expression of support for the Work Group by you and the White House would materially aid its continued effectiveness.

The Work Group is chaired by HHS' General Counsel and includes scientific and legal representatives from HHS, DoD and VA. Representatives from OSHA, OSTP, EPA, USDA and Congress' OTA have observer status, and actively participate.

The Work Group was established by the White House in 1979 in response to public and Congressional concerns about adverse health effects among Vietnam veterans following their actual or presumed exposure to Agent Orange. Agent Orange is a herbicide consisting of approximately equal parts of two phenoxy herbicides: 2,4,D and 2,4,5-T. During the manufacturing process, 2,4,5-T is unavoidably contaminated with 2,3,7,8-TCDD, a highly toxic form of dioxin.

Approximately 100 million pounds of Agent Orange were used in Vietnam between 1964 and 1970. Its use was halted when scientific reports indicated an association between exposure to 2,4,5-T of laboratory animals and birth defects in their offspring.

In 1978, the Veterans Administration began to receive claims from veterans alleging health effects resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. The specific health concerns voiced by veterans which they believe are a result of Agent Orange include cancer, birth defects in their children, loss of sex drive, liver dysfunction, sleeplessness and a tingling sensation in fingers and toes.

In order to award disability claims, the VA by statute must find that the disability arose coincident in time with or soon after military service. That statutory requirement is difficult to meet in cases of health effects having a significant latency period. In addition, statutory periods of presumption of service-connection are generally not of long enough duration to take account of latent health effects. Of the thousands of Agent Orange claims received, the VA awarded disability in approximately two dozen cases. Many Vietnam veterans saw the VA as unresponsive, unfeeling, and unsympathetic to their very real health concerns.

Widespread distrust of DoD and VA began among Vietnam veterans: DoD because it directed the use of Agent Orange and VA because it has not appeared to veterans to be sympathetic to their health concerns. With HHS as the lead agency on the Work Group, much of the acrimony accompanying the veterans' distrust of government health studies on Agent Orange has dissipated. HHS is perceived to be credible and as having no institutional conflict of interest in the outcome of the studies. DoD and VA have welcomed HHS' participation, in part because HHS' role has lent credibility to their scientific and other activities.

The Work Group has been exceptionally successful in reducing the level of near-hysteria and vituperativeness surrounding the issue. This was apparent at the Work Group's public meeting held last September, at which veterans' statements evidenced serious concern, but without the anger and bitterness that characterized the public meetings previously held by the VA.

Much of the Work Group's success can be attributed to its serious efforts to identify and fill the gaps in scientific knowledge about the long-term health effects of Agent Orange. During this process, the Work Group has neither leaped to conclusions not supported by scientific evidence, nor dismissed the veterans' health concerns. While the Work Group is aware that answers to all the questions already raised may never be found, it has stimulated the needed scientific work that will enable policy makers ultimately to make reasoned judgments on the underlying compensation issues.

The Work Group has also proven to be a unique and valuable resource. It is the only mechanism within the Federal government which brings together scientists from the relevant agencies who are knowledgeable about phenoxy herbicides and dioxins. Its mandate and scientific effort extends not only to Agent Orange concerns but also to the broader spectrum of public health concerns about these chemical compounds. Recently, the State Department indicated it is planning to ask the Work Group to work with the

Canadian government in conducting risk assessments of levels of TCDD which have been found in the Great Lakes.

All of the member and observer agencies represented strongly support the continuation and enhancement of the Work Group. Accordingly, an early expression of Secretarial interest in, and support of, this effort would be especially useful.

If you would like any additional information, I suggest that Leslie A. Platt, Deputy General Counsel for Legal Counsel, be contacted. Mr. Platt has served as Staff Director for the Work Group.

STROM THOMAS, R.C.
ROBERT T. STAFFORD, VT.
ROBERT E. TARTER, JR., WIS.
JEROME H. DENTON, ALA.
FRANK R. MARSHALL, ALASKA
ALEX SPECTER, PA.
ALAN CRAMPTON, CALIF.
JENNINGS RANDOLPH, W. VA.
SPARK M. MATSUNAGA, HAWAII
DONALD DE CONCHINI, ARIZ.
GEORGE J. MITCHELL, MAINE
KENNETH F. BERGQUIST, CHIEF COUNSEL

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 27, 1981

Mr. Martin Anderson
Assistant to the President
for Policy Development
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Martin,

I am writing in connection with a matter that is of great importance to our Nation's Vietnam veterans and a deep concern of mine on the Veterans' Affairs Committee -- Agent Orange. As you know, Agent Orange, the defoliant used by our Armed Forces in Vietnam, was contaminated by dioxin, one of the most toxic substances ever identified by the scientific community.

On December 11, 1979, President Carter established, through his Assistant for Domestic Affairs and Policy, an interagency work group to assure that all Federal efforts in the area of dioxin-related research are fully coordinated and that there is a wide and ongoing consultation among all the agencies involved. The President appointed the then-Department of Health, Education, and Welfare -- an agency well-equipped, in my view, to deal with the difficulties involved and one not generally perceived as having an interest to defend in these matters -- as the work group's chair agency.

On December 20, 1979, the Veterans' Health Programs Extension and Improvement Act of 1979 (Public Law 96-151) was enacted with provisions, in section 307(a), mandating the VA to design and conduct an epidemiological study on Agent Orange. In addition, for purposes of assuring that any dioxin-related study conducted by the Federal Government would be scientifically valid and conducted efficiently and objectively, section 307(c) of this law required the President to assure that the VA study is fully coordinated with all other Federal agencies' studies regarding the health effects in humans of dioxin exposure and that all appropriate consultation and coordination take place among the heads of Federal agencies involved in the design, conduct, monitoring, or evaluation of such dioxin studies. For your reference, I have enclosed a copy of section 307 of Public Law 96-151.

Since the interagency work group on dioxin (formally the Interagency Work Group on Phenoxy Herbicides and Contaminants) was created, it has issued six progress reports dealing with the many dioxin-related activities of the Federal agencies, including long-term research proposals and various clinical projects of a shorter length, which may

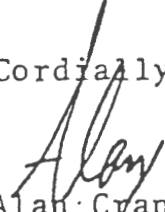
help to provide the answers we seek about the possible health effects of exposure to substances containing dioxin. In addition, the work group has itself reviewed and commented on certain of these research proposals. I believe these reports and comments have been of definite value to the agencies involved in terms of the rapid dissemination of useful information, to the Congress in terms of providing members with succinct, periodic updates, and, finally, to the public, in terms of widespread concern that the studies be as objective and useful as possible and that no unnecessary delays occur in the Federal Government's pursuit of answers in this area. I also believe that the work group could appropriately serve as the means of the President carrying out his statutory responsibility under section 307(c) of Public Law 96-151.

In light of the immediacy of the issues involved -- the VA will, after great delay, shortly sign a contract for the design of the protocol for its study -- and their great importance to Vietnam veterans and their families and to the health of many other segments of our population, I believe that the President should reauthorize the interagency group under the chairmanship of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, designating the group as the body responsible for assuring that the provisions of section 307(c) of Public Law 96-151 are fully implemented. Such a designation -- accompanied by the appropriate delegation of the authority -- would enhance the authority of the group and give greater weight to its recommendations as well as provide needed assurance of full implementation of those provisions.

I would very much appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience about these matters and learning of your response to my recommendations.

With warm regards,

Cordially,


Alan Cranston
Ranking Minority Member

Enclosures

cc: Honorable Richard S. Schweiker
Edwin Meese III
James Baker
Rufus Wilson

SEC. 807. (a)(1) The Administrator of Veterans' Affairs shall design a protocol for and conduct an epidemiological study of persons who, while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during the period of the Vietnam conflict, were exposed to any of the class of chemicals known as "the dioxins" produced during the manufacture of the various phenoxy herbicides (including the herbicide known as "Agent Orange") to determine if there may be long-term adverse health effects in such persons from such exposure. The Administrator shall also conduct a comprehensive review and scientific analysis of the literature covering other studies relating to whether there may be long-term adverse health effects in humans from exposure to such dioxins or other dioxins.

34 USC 219 note.

(2)(A)(i) The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be conducted in accordance with a protocol approved by the Director of the Office of Technology Assessment.

(ii) The Director shall monitor the conduct of such study in order to assure compliance with such protocol.

(B)(i) Concurrent with the approval or disapproval of any protocol under subparagraph (A)(i), the Director of the Office of Technology Assessment shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report explaining the basis for the Director's action in approving or disapproving such protocol and providing the Director's conclusions regarding the scientific validity and objectivity of such protocol.

Reports to congressional committees.

(ii) In the event that the Director has not approved such protocol during the one hundred and eighty days following the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall (I) submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report describing the reasons why the Director has not given such approval, and (II) submit an update report on such initial report each sixty days thereafter until such protocol is approved.

(C) The Director shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress, at each of the times specified in the second sentence of this subparagraph, a report on the Director's monitoring of the conduct of such study pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii). A report under the preceding sentence shall be submitted before the end of the six-month period beginning on the date of the approval of such protocol by the Director, before the end of the twelve-month period beginning on such date, and annually thereafter until such study is completed or terminated.

(3) The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be continued for as long after the submission of the report under subsection (b)(2) as the Administrator may determine reasonable in light of the possibility of developing through such study significant new information on the long-term adverse health effects of exposure to dioxins.

Reports to congressional committees.

(b)(1) Not later than twelve months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report on the literature review and analysis conducted under subsection (a)(1).

(2) Not later than twenty-four months after the date of the approval of the protocol pursuant to subsection (a)(2)(A)(i) and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report containing (A) a description of the results thus far obtained under the study conducted pursuant to such subsection, and (B) such comments and recommendations as the Administrator considers appropriate in light of such results.

Coordination of studies.

(c) For the purpose of assuring that any study carried out by the Federal Government with respect to the adverse health effects in humans of exposure to dioxins is scientifically valid and is conducted with efficiency and objectivity, the President shall assure that—

(1) the study conducted pursuant to subsection (a) is fully coordinated with studies which are planned, are being conducted, or have been completed by other departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the Federal Government and which pertain to the adverse health effects in humans of exposure to dioxins; and

(2) all appropriate coordination and consultation is accomplished between and among the Administrator and the heads of such departments, agencies, and instrumentalities that may be engaged, during the conduct of the study carried out pursuant to subsection (a), in the design, conduct, monitoring, or evaluation of such dioxin-exposure studies.

Appropriation authorization.

(d) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for the conduct of the study required by subsection (a).

March 26, 1981

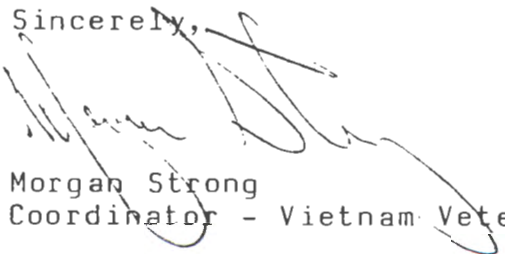
Mr. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

Enclosed please find the letter and the list of issues, with which we are concerned. As per our discussion, only one remains to be addressed, i.e. Agent Orange, no mention of the approach to be undertaken has been made by the Administration. It is understandably difficult to engage the issue lacking a Chief Administrator for the V.A. In view of the elimination of funding for the several programs, it could be advantageous to consider substantive effort to resolve the question of Agent Orange.

I thank you for your concern and your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Morgan Strong", is written over the word "Sincerely," and extends across the name and title of the sender.

Morgan Strong
Coordinator - Vietnam Veteran Coalition

Enclosure
cth a22

MIAs AND POWs

A deliberate and sustained effort to locate and return our prisoners should be made. No question remains as critical.

AGENT ORANGE

The final resolution of this agonizing issue can no longer be delayed. We are in unanimous agreement to remove the programs of research from the authority of the Veterans Administration. We propose that coordination of research and an evaluation of medical procedures of the Veterans Administration be undertaken by the National Academy of Science.

That an appointment of a Veterans Advisory Board be made to effect a realistic and substantive program for those veterans suffering symptoms of exposure.

That additional funding be diverted to allow this program development.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The maintenance and expansion of the Veterans Outreach Program Centers. This program is of singular value, and purpose, and must not be allowed to cease operation. The several centers should be supplemented by additional staff. Revision of the criteria to define service, i.e. sheer numbers served, should not be of consideration. Veteran knowledge of the centers is lacking, a program of information must be undertaken to provide the centers with the optimum utility.

This program should be extended to assist veterans incarcerated in this nation's prisons, many of whom suffer from trauma connected with their service in the war.

VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT

The further development and enforcement of the existing Federal statutes to effect employment by Federal Contractors of Vietnam Veterans. These programs if substantially effected would reduce the debilitating effects of unemployment among the Vietnam Veteran population.

The concerns we have indicated are not great in number nor insoluble. The solutions are easily determined. Particular elements of our proposals to resolve these issues will be submitted to you at your request.

To The White House
February 16, 1981

Dear Mr. President:

The Vietnam Veterans, those of us who fought in that war, are addressing our several concerns to you in the hope of remedy.

It has been over eight years since the end of that divisive war and throughout that time we have been silent. It is the stimulus of recent events that has drawn us together in shared experience and common purpose. The sense of estrangement and alienation we share is that bond which unites us. We have quietly borne the guilt of a nation, disgraced by our sacrifice, denied value and welcome. The nobility of service should not be diminished by strident claims of a dishonorable war, events have proven the contrary.

It is now that those who fought and those that gave their lives in that war be recognized for their service to country. They ask nothing more than that afforded those who fought and those who died before them. It is time that they rejoin the society that has excluded them.

It is time to address the very real concerns of those War Veterans. It is with the faith in these ideals of country that has sustained us through these bitter years, that we in common strength of purpose will resolve them.



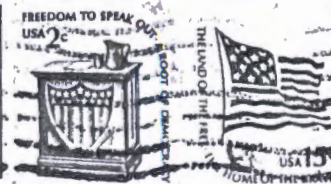
VIETNAM VETERANS COALITION



Westchester County

Morgan Strong - Veterans Service

Office of the County Executive
County Office Building
White Plains, New York 10601



Mr. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500



ERICSON
YACHTS

Red Cavaney
President

3/31

Dear Mark —

found barboard +

rec. draft response.

Thanks

THE WHITE HOUSE
VETERANS COORDINATING COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON

March 27, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Elizabeth Dole
Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison

FROM: Dennis K. Rhoades *DKR*
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Interagency Working Group on Dioxin

The White House Veterans Coordinating Committee has been kept fully informed of the progress of the Interagency Working Group on Dioxin (Agent Orange), a matter of concern to many Vietnam era veterans and their families. We have additionally enjoyed a close working relationship with the Group and we believe this important work must continue.

As you may know, the Work Group is chaired by the Department of Health and Human Services and includes scientific and legal representatives from DoD and VA. Representatives from Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Science and Technology Policy and Congress' Office of Technology Affairs have observer status, and actively participate.

The Work Group was established by the White House in 1979 in response to public and Congressional concerns about adverse health effects among Vietnam veterans following their actual or presumed exposure to Agent Orange. Agent Orange is a herbicide consisting of approximately equal parts of two phenoxy herbicides: 2, 4, D and 2, 4, 5-T. During the manufacturing process, 2, 4, 5-T is unavoidably contaminated with 2, 3, 7, 8-TCDD, a highly toxic form of dioxin.

Approximately 100 million pounds of Agent Orange were used in Vietnam between 1964 and 1970. Its use was halted when scientific reports indicated an association between exposure to 2, 4, 5-T of laboratory animals and birth defects in their offspring.

In 1978, the Veterans Administration began to receive claims from veterans alleging health effects resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. The specific health concerns voiced by veterans which they believe are a result of Agent Orange include cancer, birth defects in their children, loss of sex drive, liver dysfunction, sleeplessness and a tingling sensation in fingers and toes.

In order to award disability claims, the VA by statute must find that the disability arose coincident in time with or soon after military service. That statutory requirement is difficult to meet in cases of health effects having a significant latency period. In addition, statutory periods of presumption of service-connection are generally not of long enough duration to take account of latent health effects.

Of the thousands of Agent Orange claims received, the VA has awarded disability in approximately two dozen cases.

The issue of Agent Orange is therefore one of high public visibility, fueled by misinformation and lack of hard scientific data on the long term health effects of dioxin. Many of the groups concerned with Agent Orange have a deep seeded distrust of the VA and the Department of Defense and the efforts of the two agencies to conduct research into the problems.

The Work Group has been successful in beginning to reduce the level of near-hysteria surrounding Agent Orange. Much of the Work Group's success can be attributed to its serious efforts to identify and fill the gaps in scientific knowledge about the long-term health effects of Agent Orange. During this process, the Work Group has neither leaped to conclusions not supported by scientific evidence, nor dismissed the veterans' health concerns. While the Work Group is aware that answers to all the questions already raised may never be found, it has stimulated needed scientific work that will enable policy makers ultimately to make reasoned judgments on the underlying compensation issues.

The Work Group has also proven to be a unique and valuable resource. It is the only mechanism within the Federal government which brings together scientists from the relevant agencies who are knowledgeable about phenoxy herbicides and dioxins. Its mandate and scientific efforts extends not only to Agent Orange concerns but also to the broader spectrum of public health concerns about these chemical compounds.

All of the member and observer agencies represented strongly support the continuation and enhancement of the Work Group. Accordingly, an early expression of White House interest in, and support of, this effort would be especially useful. I would be remiss if I too did not add my full endorsement of this effort. It is imperative that we not delay in reaffirming our commitment to the Vietnam veterans and their families.

VIETNAM VETERANS

329 EIGHTH STREET NE, WASHINGTON,

July 17, 1981

*Scheduling
cc: not to Blackwell*

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

032725

Mr. President:

Our meeting earlier today reaffirmed my belief that you are most sincere in your expressions of concern and support for the Vietnam veteran.

It was, therefore, particularly gratifying to me that you agreed, while we were being photographed together, to a follow-up meeting with myself and a small group of Vietnam veterans to further discuss some of our concerns. Visible presidential involvement is perhaps the most significant step that can be taken to let the Vietnam veteran know that his government and countrymen do recognize and appreciate his service.

I will contact Mrs. Dole and arrange a meeting within the next couple of weeks to discuss the timing and agenda for our meeting, hopefully in August or early September.

Thank you again, Mr. President, for your obvious concern and commitment to those who served.

Sincerely,

Robert O. Muller
Robert O. Muller
Executive Director

ROM/ml

cc: Mrs. Elizabeth Dole

ID # 032725

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

VA☐ O - OUTGOING☐ H - INTERNAL☒ I - INCOMINGDate Correspondence
Received (YY/MM/DD) 8/10/72Name of Correspondent: Robert O. Muller☒ MI Mail Report

User Codes: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

Subject: Hopes his follow up meeting with
the President to discuss concerns
of Vietnam veterans can be arranged
in August or early Sept.

ROUTE TO:

ACTION

DISPOSITION

Office/Agency	(Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response	Code	Completion Date YY/MM/DD
<u>SC Rawl</u>		ORIGINATOR	<u>8/10/72</u>			<u>1 1</u>
<u>PL Blac</u>		Referral Note:	<u>CS 8/10/72</u>		<u>C</u>	<u>8/10/72</u>
		Referral Note:				<u>1 1</u>
		Referral Note:				<u>1 1</u>
		Referral Note:				<u>1 1</u>
		Referral Note:				<u>1 1</u>

ACTION CODES:

A - Appropriate Action
 C - Comment/Recommendation
 D - Draft Response
 F - Furnish Fact Sheet
 to be used as Enclosure

I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
 R - Direct Reply w/Copy
 S - For Signature
 X - Interim Reply

DISPOSITION CODES:

A - Answered
 B - Non-Special Referral
 C - Completed
 S - Suspended

FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:

Type of Response = Initials of Signer
 Code = "A"
 Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: _____

Keep this worksheet attached to the original incoming letter.

Send all routing updates to Central Reference (Room 75, OEOB).

Always return completed correspondence record to Central Files.

Refer questions about the correspondence tracking system to Central Reference, ext. 2590.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

I called Karna Small
per Aleana + Red's
instructions & told her
that you had been in
touch with Bob Muller
on this meeting. However,
I did not know what the
outcome ~~would be~~ was but
that you would call her.
She will do nothing until
she talks with you if
anything should arise in
the meantime.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 20, 1981

Morton,

At the recent Vets meeting with the President, Bob Mueller apparently pulled the President aside and asked whether the President would meet with a group of his people.

We're not sure what RR said, but now Bob M. wants to announce the intention to hold such a meeting. Per Red, anything that is said without staff in attendance has the net effect of not happening at all.

Would you please talk to Mueller right away to square this away? Karna Small is apparently on hold until she gets further information, and EHD would like an update.

thanks-

Diana

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Karna
On
hold

546-3700
7

to talk to
press

Bob
Muller

Bob Muller

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Martin -

This is the Bobby
Muller letter that

Diana mentioned -

This needs your

input for EHD,

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 7/22

TO: *Morton*

FROM: *Drava*

For your info

☒

Per our conversation

☐

Other:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

7/21/81

FROM: GAY W. SHANAHAN

TO:

Diana. Lozano

Incoming mail forwarded for your
handling and disposition.

Advise if action required by EHD
or RC..

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

329 EIGHTH STREET NE, WASHINGTON, DC 20002 ★ 202/546-3700

July 17, 1981

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole
Special Asssistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Dole:

Your very visible expressions of disapproval of my comments to the President during our meeting earlier today leads me to write this letter in an attempt to address what I suspect are your concerns.

I asked the President to explain why he did not personally swear in Mr. Robert Nimmo as VA Administrator, in part, to let him know that his absense was noted, not only by myself, but by the veteran community as a whole. As I tried to make clear, we feel strongly that during the last administration the failure of the President to involve himself more directly in veteran affairs adversely affected the development and implementation of veteran programs.

During my first meeting with you, I mentioned that the record so far of this Administration regarding the Vietnam veteran was distressing. I also mentioned that the situation could be remedied easily enough by the President personally addressing some of the concerns that were so widely reported in the national media.

I say "easily enough," because of two reasons. The Administration still was new enough to allow its early views to be considered "provisional." Second, the chief spokesman for the administration concerning the future of Vietnam veteran programs was, in the absense of a VA administrator, Mr. Stockman. I am doing nothing more than simply reporting a well-known fact when I say that David Stockman was perhaps the worst spokesman you could have had for the reason, rightly or wrongly, that he is known to have avoided military service by attending Harvard Divinity School. Vietnam veterans around the country were honestly outraged that he was the one who was telling them that the readjustment programs were no longer justified.

At any time in this process, had the President addressed the issues himself, I am confident that he would have supported the Vietnam veteran and put much of this criticism and very visible discontent within the ranks of Vietnam veterans to rest.

Having met the President, I am reaffirmed in my belief that he is a sincere man of basic values which will always find him in support of the Vietnam veteran, as well as all combat veterans. At our meeting he spoke with a conviction and in a spontaneous enough manner to give us all confidence that he is personally a great friend of the veteran.

cc:
Red


Mrs. Elizabeth Dole
Page Two

July 17, 1981

Since most of our meeting this morning dealt with the Vietnam veteran, I took the liberty of asking the President if he would be willing to meet privately with myself and a small group of Vietnam veterans to further discuss our concerns. I am extremely pleased that he agreed to such a meeting. I believe this meeting will be very helpful in sending a message following all of the recent publicity surrounding the "hunger strikers" that the President does care greatly about Vietnam veterans and that there is a right way to present your concerns which if followed can produce the desired results.

Thank you for a very rewarding meeting. I am increasingly confident about our ability to work closely and effectively to recognize and assist the Vietnam veteran.

Sincerely



Robert O. Muller
Executive Director

ROM/ml

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

329 EIGHTH STREET NE, WASHINGTON, DC 20002 * 202/546-3700

July 17, 1981

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

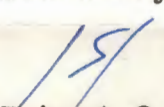
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I will contact Mrs. Dole and arrange a meeting within the next couple of weeks to discuss the timing and agenda for our meeting, hopefully in August or early September.

Thank you again, Mr. President, for your obvious concern and commitment to those who served.

Sincerely,


Robert O. Muller
Executive Director

ROM/ml

cc: Mrs. Elizabeth Dole 

Ex-G.I.'s, in Hanoi, Are Hopeful on Talks

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

HANOI, Dec. 20 — After six hours of talks with Hanoi officials, four American veterans of the Vietnam War expressed hope today that the emotional issue of the 2,500 United States servicemen still missing in Southeast Asia could be resolved in the near future.

Robert O. Muller, executive director of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the leader of the visiting group, urged the Vietnamese to invite the United States to send personnel to assist in the search for the missing Americans. Such a step would "substantially improve" Vietnam's relations with the United States and ease the "logistical burdens" that the Vietnamese claim to have in hunting for the remains of the servicemen.

Most of the 2,500 servicemen missing in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are believed dead, although anguished American families believe that some of them remain alive as prisoners of war. Reagan Administration officials believe that the Vietnamese Government has been uncooperative in the search for the missing Americans, although the Hanoi Government insists that there are no American prisoners of war alive in Vietnam, and all remains have been handed over to the American side.

Vo Hoang, director of the Vietnamese office in charge of finding missing Americans, said that the "logistical problems were enormous" in terms of sending out helicopters and search parties to jungles to hunt for the remains. Mr. Hoang told Mr. Muller that there was "considerable hostility" in villages to search parties looking for Americans.

Interested In American Proposal

"The village people ask why are we doing this for the Americans," Mr. Hoang said. "Why do we dwell on the past? Why don't we build the future?"

Nonetheless, Mr. Muller, a 36-year-old former Marine, said that the Vietnamese "viewed with interest" his group's proposal to send Americans to Vietnam to join the search.

"This type of move would remove a very clear obstacle to the development of relations between Hanoi and the United States," Mr. Muller said. "We told them that, and they knew it."

The Vietnamese, in a meeting with the four Americans who are here unofficially, also promised to allow more Vietnam War veterans to visit the country.

"I get the distinct sense that the Vietnamese want to have good relations with the United States Government," Mr. Muller said.

Other members of the group who are visiting Vietnam for six days are Michael Harbert, a former Air Force sergeant, Tom Bird, an infantryman during the war with the 1st Air Cavalry Division and John Terrano, a former Navy seaman. All are members of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Several Blunt Exchanges

The group has held several blunt exchanges with Vietnamese officials and has had some internal bickering and conflicts. This morning, for example, the group reluctantly agreed to acquiesce to a Vietnamese request to lay a wreath at the tomb of Ho Chi Minh, but only after asking the Vietnamese to bar photographs.

The veterans themselves, traveling around the city in Russian-made limousines to meet Vietnamese officials, express a range of emotions as they gaze at Vietnamese families pedaling bicycles over the streets.

"It's so quiet, and the primitive level of everything here is stunning," Mr. Muller said. "When you see this place it's almost obscene to think what we dumped on these people. There's nothing here."

Mr. Harbert said that the "standard opening lines of rhetoric at each meeting about United States imperialism"

disturbed him.

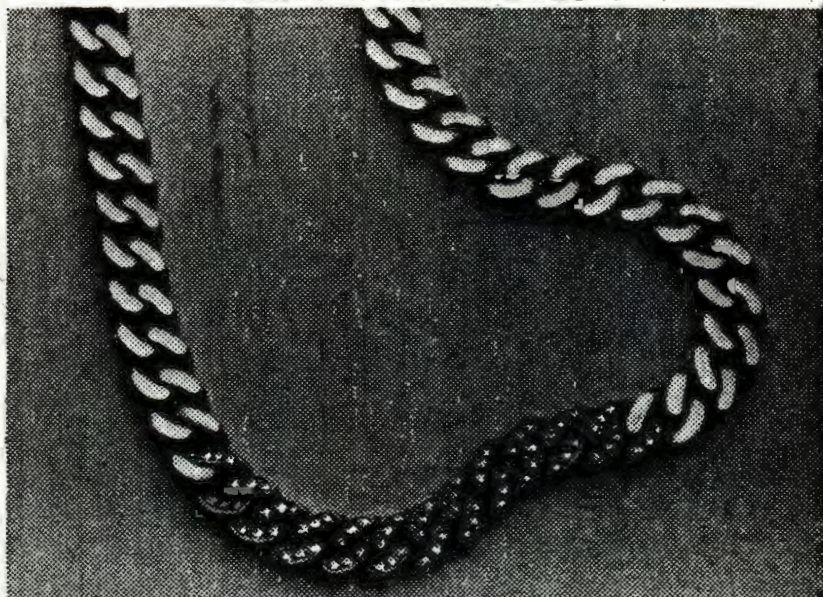
"I don't like it," he said. "I'd like to reply. They've done some pretty nasty things too."

Mr. Bird, who is currently director of the Veterans Ensemble Theater in New

York, said "a couple of years ago I would have been given a medal for shooting some of the people I'm meeting with."

"It blows my mind," he went on, "What a crazy world this is."

CHRISTMAS PRESENT



Tiffany Links Gold and Diamonds

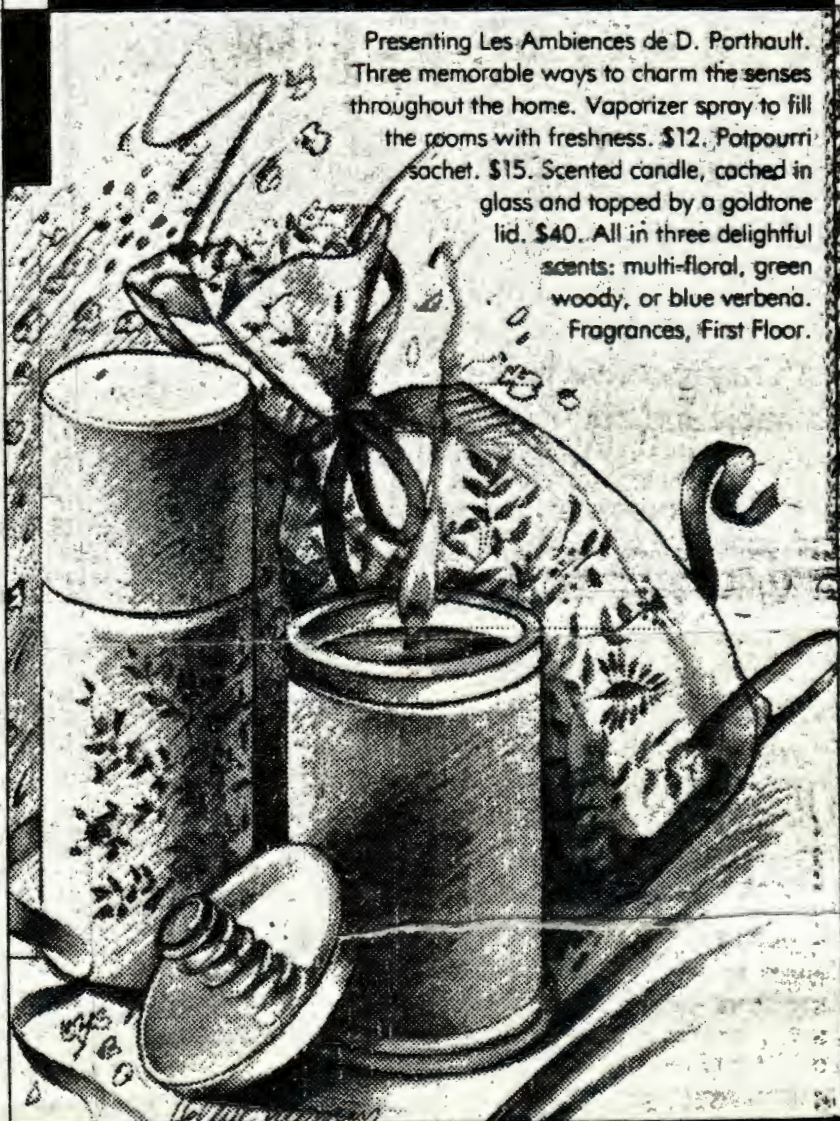
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Matching bracelet, \$1,850.

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