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Last Updated: 04/29/2025



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS US ARMY MILITARY DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
FORT LESLEY J. MCNAIR
WASHINGTON, DC 20319

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

ANC&SE

30 March 1984

E. V. H

MEMORANDUM THRU EDWARD V. HICKEY, JR.

FOR WILLIAM F. SITTMANN /MICHAEL K. DEEVER

SUBJECT: Ceremonies for the Unknown Serviceman of Vietnam

1. The President should arrive at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda at 2:35 p.m. on 25 May 1984.

MYER 2. Upon arrival at the East Capitol Plaza, he will be assisted to his position in the Rotunda by his escort officer. When all participants are in position, the casket will be brought into the Rotunda. At this time, the President will deliver the eulogy. At the conclusion of the eulogy, a soldier will position himself near the foot of the casket with the Presidential Wreath. The President should move to him and place the wreath at the casket assisted by the wreath bearer, and return to his position. The benediction will be given at this time. This ceremony will last approximately 15 minutes and concludes the ceremonies for the day.

Dolan 3. The President should arrive at Arlington National Cemetery on 28 May 1984 at 1:30 p.m. He will be escorted to the dismount point at the north entrance of the Amphitheater. Upon his arrival at the north entrance, he will be taken to the Memorial Display Room; when all is ready, the President will be escorted to his seat in the Apse. The funeral service will last approximately 25 minutes. The U.S. Army Band will sound honors to the Unknown, and the casket will be carried into the Apse--the President should stand during honors and place his right hand over his heart. When the casket is in place, the U.S. Marine Band will begin the funeral service with the playing of the National Anthem--the President should stand and place his right hand over his heart. At the completion of the National Anthem, there will be 1 minute of silence. At the conclusion of the 1 minute of silence, the Catholic chaplain will give the invocation. The Trumpet Call will then be sounded, and the audience will join in singing "My Country 'Tis of Thee." At the conclusion of the song, the President will make a brief address, present the Medal of Honor, and return to his seat. The chorus will sing "On Bended Knee." The Jewish chaplain will then read Psalm 91 followed by the U.S. Army Chorus singing "The Last Words of David." The Protestant chaplain will then read the New Testament lesson from John 14:1-7, 15-17 and 27. Following the reading, the chorus will sing "The 23rd Psalm." At the conclusion of the song, the Orthodox chaplain will pronounce the benediction--all standing. The

ANC&SE

SUBJECT: Ceremonies for the Unknown Serviceman of Vietnam

President will then be escorted into the Memorial Display Room. When all is ready on the Plaza, the President will follow the casket, escorted by General Ballantyne, to his position on the Plaza. The chaplains will then deliver their committal prayers. At the conclusion of the prayers, the President will place the Presidential Wreath and return to his position facing the Tomb. The Saluting Battery will fire a 21-gun salute--the President should place his right hand over his heart. At the completion of the gun salute, the chaplain will give the benediction. At the conclusion of the benediction, the President should again salute as the firing party fires 3 volleys followed by the playing of Taps. When Taps is complete, the interment flag will be folded and presented to General Ballantyne. General Ballantyne will then give the flag to the President. The President will then present the flag to the Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery, for safekeeping. The ceremony is thus concluded, and the President will be ushered off the Plaza to his vehicle for departure.



PAUL C. MILLER

Director

Ceremonies and Special Events

1 Encl
State Funeral Plan

• FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

THE STATE FUNERAL PLAN FOR THE INTERMENT
OF THE
UNKNOWN SERVICEMAN OF VIETNAM

The designation ceremony for the Unknown American Serviceman killed in Vietnam will take place in Hawaii on 17 May 1984 at 1100. Following the designation ceremony, the Unknown will depart Hawaii with ceremony at approximately 1200 and be transported by ship to Alameda Naval Air Station, California, arriving no later than noon, 24 May 1984. The anticipated travel time from Hawaii to San Francisco is approximately 7 days. The Unknown will arrive at Alameda Naval Air Station with ceremony and will be transported to the base chapel, Travis Air Force Base, for repose. The Unknown will be received with ceremony and will lie in repose until 0500, 25 May 1984. Public viewing during the period of repose will be continuous until 2 hours prior to the departure from the base chapel, if public interest requires. A guard of honor will attend the Unknown while in repose.

On 25 May 1984, the deceased will depart the base chapel with ceremony at 0530 and will be transported to the Travis air terminal for departure. The Unknown will depart Travis Air Force Base with ceremony at 0600 and will be transported to Andrews Air Force Base. The Unknown of Vietnam will arrive at Andrews Air Force Base with ceremony on Friday, 25 May 1984, at approximately 1400 and will be escorted to the U.S. Capitol for lying in state.

The deceased will be received with ceremony at the U.S. Capitol at approximately 1445 and will lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda for approximately 3 days, until 1200 Memorial Day. A guard of honor will attend the Unknown until departure from the U.S. Capitol. Public viewing during the period of lying in state in the Capitol Rotunda will be continuous until 2 hours prior to the departure from the Capitol, if public interest requires. The Unknown will be moved from the U.S. Capitol at 1200, Monday, 28 May 1984, with ceremony, placed on the caisson on the East Plaza of the Capitol and proceed to Delaware and Constitution Avenue to join the main funeral procession to Arlington National Cemetery. A flyover will be conducted as the caisson is centered on Memorial Bridge.

The funeral service will be held in the Amphitheater, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), at approximately 1400 followed by interment at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The casket will be closed throughout all ceremonies. Honors will consist of 4 ruffles and flourishes and a 21-gun salute. The period of mourning will be from reveille, on the day of arrival in Washington, D.C. to retreat, the day of interment in Arlington National Cemetery.

Encl 1

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1984 MAY 25 PM 5: 19

May 24, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
AND DIRECTOR OF SPEECHWRITING

FROM: FRED F. FIELDING 
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Draft Presidential Remarks for the
Vietnam Unknown Soldier Entombment

Our office has reviewed the above-referenced draft remarks and has no legal or other substantive objection to them.

I did note, however, that the draft makes no reference to the awarding of the Medal of Honor to the Vietnam Unknown Soldier, which I understood was to be done at these ceremonies. If so, you may want to consider working into the remarks a reference to the Medal of Honor (which was also presented to the Unknown Soldiers from World War I, World War II and the Korean War).

Also, the clause set off by dashes in the sentence at the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2, as phrased, could be interpreted as implying that those who fought in Vietnam did not fight in a "noble cause." This should be rewritten to avoid any chance of such a misinterpretation.

cc: Richard G. Darman

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 28, 1984

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY
HONORING VIETNAM UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Arlington National Cemetery

2:15 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: My fellow Americans, Memorial Day is a day of ceremonies and speeches. Throughout America today, we honor the dead of our wars. We recall their valor and their sacrifices. We remember they gave their lives so that others might live.

We're also gathered here for a special event; the national funeral for an unknown soldier who will today join the heroes of three other wars.

When he spoke at a ceremony at Gettysburg in 1863, President Lincoln reminded us that through their deeds, the dead had spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, and that we living could only honor them by re-dedicating ourselves to the cause for which they so willingly gave a last full measure of devotion.

Well, this is especially so today, for in our minds and hearts is the memory of Vietnam and all that that conflict meant for those who sacrificed on the field of battle and for their loved ones who suffered here at home.

Not long ago when a memorial was dedicated here in Washington to our Vietnam veterans, the events surrounding that dedication were a stirring reminder of America's resilience, of how our nation could learn and grow and transcend the tragedies of the past.

During the dedication ceremonies, the rolls of those who died and are still missing were read for three days in a candle-light ceremony at the National Cathedral. And the veterans of Vietnam who were never welcomed home with speeches and bands, but who were never defeated in battle and were heroes as surely as any who have ever fought in a noble cause, staged their own parade on Constitution Avenue. As America watched them, some in wheelchairs, all of them proud, there was a feeling that this nation, as a nation, we were coming together again and that we had, at long last, welcomed the boys home.

"A lot of healing went on", said one combat veteran who helped organize support for the memorial.

MORE

And, then, there was this newspaper account that appeared after the ceremonies. I'd like to read it to you. "Yesterday, crowds returned to the Memorial. Among them was Herbie Petit a machinist and former Marine from New Orleans. 'Last night,' he said, standing near the wall, 'I went out to dinner with some other ex-Marines. There was also a group of college students in the restaurant. We started talking to each other. And before we left, they stood up and cheered us. The whole week,' Petit said, his eyes red, 'it was worth it just for that.'"

It has been worth it. We Americans have learned to listen to each other and to trust each other again. We've learned that government owes the people an explanation and needs their support for its actions at home and abroad. And we have learned, and I pray this time for good, the most valuable lesson of all -- the preciousness of human freedom.

It has been a lesson relearned not just by Americans but by all the people of the world. Yet, while the experience of Vietnam has given us a stark lesson that ultimately must move the conscience of the world, we must remember that we cannot today, as much as some might want to, close this chapter in our history, for the war in Southeast Asia still haunts a small but brave group of Americans -- the families of those still missing in the Vietnam conflict.

They live day and night with uncertainty, with an emptiness, with a void that we cannot fathom. Today, some sit among you. Their feelings are a mixture of pride and fear. They're proud of their sons or husbands, fathers or brothers who bravely and nobly answered the call of their country. But some of them fear that this ceremony writes a final chapter, leaving those they love forgotten.

Well, today, then, one way to honor those who served or may still be serving in Vietnam is to gather here and rededicate ourselves to securing the answers for the families of those missing in action. I ask the members of Congress, the leaders of veterans' groups and the citizens of an entire nation present or listening to give these families your help and your support, for they still sacrifice and suffer.

Vietnam is not over for them. They cannot rest until they know the fate of those they loved and watched march off to serve their country. Our dedication to their cause must be strengthened with these events today. We write no last chapters. We close no books. We put away no final memories. An end to America's involvement in Vietnam cannot come before we've achieved the fullest possible accounting of those missing in action. (Applause.)

This can only happen when their families know with certainty that this nation discharged her duty to those who served nobly and well. Today, a united people call upon Hanoi with one voice: Heal the sorest wound of this conflict, return our sons to America, end the grief of those who are innocent and undeserving of any retribution. The Unknown Soldier who is returned to us today and whom we lay to rest is symbolic of all our missing sons.

MORE

and we will present him with the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration that we can bestow.

About him we may well wonder, as others have. As a child, did he play on some street in a great American city? Or did he work beside his father on a farm out in America's heartland? Did he marry? Did he have children? Did he look expectantly to return to a bride?

We'll never know the answer to these questions about his life. We do know, though, why he died. He saw the horrors of war, but bravely faced them -- certain his cause, and his country's cause was a noble one. That he was fighting for human dignity, for free men everywhere. Today we pause to embrace him and all who served us so well in a war whose end offered no parades, no flags, and so little thanks.

We can be worthy of the values and ideals for which our sons sacrificed -- worthy of their courage in the face of a fear that few of us will ever experience -- by honoring their commitment and devotion to duty and country. Many veterans of Vietnam still serve in the armed forces, work in our offices, on our farms, and in our factories. Most have kept their experiences private. But most have been strengthened by their call to duty.

A grateful nation opens her heart today in gratitude for their sacrifice, for their courage, and for their noble service. Let us, if we must, debate the lessons learned at some other time. Today, we simply say with pride, thank you dear son. May God cradle you in His loving arms.

We present to you our nation's highest award, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for service above and beyond the call of duty -- in action with the enemy during the Vietnam era.

Thank you.

END

2:25 P.M. EDT

VIETNAM UNKNOWN SOLDIER ENTOMBMENT

MEMORIAL DAY 'IS A DAY OF CEREMONIES AND SPEECHES. THROUGHOUT AMERICA TODAY, WE HONOR THE DEAD OF OUR WARS. WE RECALL THEIR VALOR AND THEIR SACRIFICES -- WE REMEMBER THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE. WE ARE ALSO GATHERED HERE FOR A SPECIAL EVENT, THE NATIONAL FUNERAL FOR AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER WHO WILL TODAY JOIN THE HEROES OF THREE OTHER WARS.

WHEN HE SPOKE AT A CEREMONY AT GETTYSBURG IN 1863, PRESIDENT LINCOLN REMINDED US THAT -- THROUGH THEIR DEEDS -- THE DEAD HAD SPOKEN MORE ELOQUENTLY FOR THEMSELVES THAN ANY OF THE LIVING EVER COULD, AND THAT WE THE LIVING COULD ONLY HONOR THEM BY REDEDICATING OURSELVES TO THE CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY SO WILLINGLY GAVE A LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO TODAY; FOR IN OUR MINDS AND HEARTS IS THE MEMORY OF VIETNAM AND ALL THAT CONFLICT MEANT FOR THOSE WHO SACRIFICED ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE AND FOR THEIR LOVED ONES WHO SUFFERED HERE AT HOME.

NOT LONG AGO, WHEN A MEMORIAL WAS DEDICATED HERE IN WASHINGTON TO OUR VIETNAM VETERANS, THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THAT DEDICATION WERE A STIRRING REMINDER OF AMERICA'S RESILIENCE, OF HOW OUR NATION COULD LEARN AND GROW AND TRANSCEND THE TRAGEDIES OF THE PAST.

DURING THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES, THE ROLLS OF THOSE WHO DIED AND ARE STILL MISSING WERE READ FOR 3 DAYS IN A CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY AT THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL.

AND THE VETERANS OF VIETNAM WHO WERE NEVER WELCOMED HOME WITH SPEECHES AND BANDS -- BUT WHO WERE NEVER DEFEATED IN BATTLE AND WERE HEROES AS SURELY AS ANY WHO HAVE EVER FOUGHT IN A NOBLE CAUSE -- STAGED THEIR OWN PARADE ON CONSTITUTION AVENUE.

AS AMERICA WATCHED THEM, SOME IN WHEELCHAIRS, ALL OF THEM PROUD, THERE WAS A FEELING THAT AS A NATION WE WERE COMING TOGETHER AGAIN AND THAT WE HAD -- AT LONG LAST -- WELCOMED THE BOYS HOME.

"A LOT OF HEALING . . . WENT ON," SAID ONE COMBAT VETERAN WHO HELPED ORGANIZE SUPPORT FOR THE MEMORIAL. AND THEN THERE WAS THIS NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT THAT APPEARED AFTER THE CEREMONIES. I WOULD LIKE TO READ IT TO YOU:

"YESTERDAY, CROWDS RETURNED TO THE MEMORIAL. AMONG THEM WAS HERBIE PETIT, A MACHINIST AND FORMER MARINE FROM NEW ORLEANS. 'LAST NIGHT,' HE SAID, STANDING NEAR THE WALL, 'I WENT OUT TO DINNER WITH SOME OTHER EX-MARINES. THERE WAS ALSO A GROUP OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE RESTAURANT. WE STARTED TALKING TO EACH OTHER AND BEFORE WE LEFT THEY STOOD UP AND CHEERED US.'

'THE WHOLE WEEK,' PETIT SAID, HIS EYES RED, 'IT WAS WORTH IT JUST FOR THAT.'"

IT HAS BEEN WORTH IT. WE AMERICANS HAVE LEARNED TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND TO TRUST EACH OTHER AGAIN. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT GOVERNMENT OWES THE PEOPLE AN EXPLANATION AND NEEDS THEIR SUPPORT FOR ITS ACTIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD. AND WE HAVE LEARNED -- AND I PRAY THIS TIME FOR GOOD -- THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON OF ALL: THE PRECIOUSNESS OF HUMAN FREEDOM.

IT HAS BEEN A LESSON RELEARNED NOT JUST BY AMERICANS BUT BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.

YET WHILE THE EXPERIENCE OF VIETNAM HAS GIVEN US A STARK LESSON THAT ULTIMATELY MUST MOVE THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE CANNOT TODAY -- AS MUCH AS SOME MIGHT WANT TO -- CLOSE THIS CHAPTER IN OUR HISTORY.

FOR THE WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA STILL HAUNTS A SMALL BUT BRAVE GROUP OF AMERICANS, THE FAMILIES OF THOSE STILL MISSING IN THE VIETNAM CONFLICT. THEY LIVE DAY AND NIGHT WITH UNCERTAINTY, WITH AN EMPTINESS, WITH A VOID WE CANNOT FATHOM. TODAY, SOME SIT AMONG YOU; THEIR FEELINGS ARE A MIXTURE OF PRIDE AND FEAR.

THEY ARE PROUD OF THEIR SONS OR HUSBANDS, FATHERS OR BROTHERS, WHO BRAVELY AND NOBLY ANSWERED THE CALL OF THEIR COUNTRY, BUT SOME OF THEM FEAR THAT THIS CEREMONY WRITES A FINAL CHAPTER, LEAVING THOSE THEY LOVE FORGOTTEN.

TODAY, THEN, ONE WAY TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVED OR MAY STILL BE SERVING IN VIETNAM IS TO GATHER HERE AND REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO SECURING THE ANSWERS FOR THE FAMILIES OF THOSE MISSING IN ACTION. I ASK THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THE LEADERS OF VETERANS GROUPS, AND THE CITIZENS OF AN ENTIRE NATION -- PRESENT OR LISTENING -- TO GIVE THESE FAMILIES YOUR HELP AND YOUR SUPPORT, FOR THEY STILL SACRIFICE AND SUFFER; VIETNAM IS NOT OVER FOR THEM; THEY CANNOT REST UNTIL THEY KNOW THE FATE OF THOSE THEY LOVED AND WATCHED MARCH OFF TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY.

OUR DEDICATION TO THEIR CAUSE MUST BE STRENGTHENED WITH THESE EVENTS TODAY; WE WRITE NO LAST CHAPTERS, WE CLOSE NO BOOKS, WE PUT AWAY NO FINAL MEMORIES. AN END TO AMERICA'S INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM CANNOT COME BEFORE WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING OF THOSE MISSING IN ACTION. THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN WHEN THEIR FAMILIES KNOW WITH CERTAINTY THAT THIS NATION DISCHARGED HER DUTY TO THOSE WHO SERVED NOBLY AND WELL. TODAY, A UNITED PEOPLE CALL UPON HANOI WITH ONE VOICE -- HEAL THE SOREST WOUND OF THIS CONFLICT; RETURN OUR SONS TO AMERICA; END THE GRIEF OF THOSE WHO ARE INNOCENT AND UNDESERVING OF ANY RETRIBUTION.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER WHO HAS RETURNED TO US TODAY AND WHOM WE LAY TO REST IS SYMBOLIC OF ALL OUR MISSING SONS. AND WE WILL PRESENT HIM THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR, THE HIGHEST MILITARY DECORATION WE CAN BESTOW.

ABOUT HIM, WE MAY WELL WONDER AS OTHERS HAVE: AS A CHILD, DID HE PLAY ON SOME STREET IN A GREAT AMERICAN CITY, DID HE WORK BESIDE HIS FATHER ON A FARM IN AMERICA'S HEARTLAND? DID HE MARRY? DID HE HAVE CHILDREN, DID HE LOOK EXPECTANTLY TO RETURN TO A BRIDE? WE WILL NEVER KNOW THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS LIFE. WE DO KNOW, THOUGH, WHY HE DIED. HE SAW THE HORRORS OF WAR BUT BRAVELY FACED THEM, CERTAIN HIS OWN CAUSE AND HIS COUNTRY'S CAUSE WAS A NOBLE ONE; THAT HE WAS FIGHTING FOR HUMAN DIGNITY, FOR FREE MEN EVERYWHERE. TODAY, WE PAUSE, TO EMBRACE HIM AND ALL WHO SERVED US SO WELL IN A WAR WHOSE END OFFERED NO PARADES, NO FLAGS, AND SO LITTLE THANKS. WE CAN BE WORTHY OF THE VALUES AND IDEALS FOR WHICH OUR SONS SACRIFICED, WORTHY OF THEIR COURAGE IN THE FACE OF A FEAR THAT FEW OF US WILL EVER EXPERIENCE BY HONORING THEIR COMMITMENT AND DEVOTION TO DUTY AND COUNTRY.

MANY VETERANS OF VIETNAM STILL SERVE IN THE ARMED FORCES, WORK IN OUR OFFICES, ON OUR FARMS, IN OUR FACTORIES. MOST HAVE KEPT THEIR EXPERIENCES PRIVATE, BUT MOST HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THEIR CALL TO DUTY. A GRATEFUL NATION OPENS HER HEART TODAY IN GRATITUDE FOR THEIR SACRIFICE, FOR THEIR COURAGE AND THEIR NOBLE SERVICE. LET US, IF WE MUST, DEBATE THE LESSONS LEARNED AT SOME OTHER TIME; TODAY WE SIMPLY SAY WITH PRIDE: THANK YOU, DEAR SON; AND MAY GOD CRADLE YOU IN HIS LOVING ARMS.

#

Tom
AG-FYI



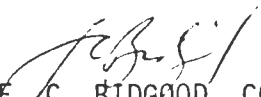
Office of the Administrator
of Veterans Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20420

May 24, 1984

MEMO TO: Craig L. Fuller
Assistant to the President
for Cabinet Affairs

SUBJ: Presidential Remarks: Vietnam
Unknown Soldier Entombment
Monday, May 28, 1984

As requested, the subject remarks have been reviewed. The enclosed reflects our suggested comments.


F. C. BIDGOOD, COLONEL, USA
Executive Assistant to the
Administrator

Enclosure

RECORDS

1984 MAY 23 PM 6:00

(Dolan/BE)
May 23, 1984
5:00 p.m.

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: VIETNAM UNKNOWN SOLDIER ENTOMBMENT
MONDAY, MAY 28, 1984**

Memorial Day is a day of ceremonies and speeches. Throughout America today, we honor the dead of our wars. We recall their valor and their sacrifices -- we remember they gave their lives so that others might live.

When he spoke at a ceremony like this at Gettysburg in 1863, President Lincoln reminded us that -- through their deeds -- the dead had spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, and that we the living could only honor them by rededicating ourselves to the cause for which they so willingly gave a last full measure of devotion.

This is especially so today; for in our minds and hearts is the memory of Vietnam and all that conflict meant for those who sacrificed on the field of battle and for their loved ones who suffered here at home.

Not long ago, when a memorial was dedicated here in Washington to our Vietnam veterans, the events surrounding that dedication were a stirring reminder of America's resilience, of how our Nation could learn and grow and transcend the tragedies of the past.

During the dedication ceremonies, the rolls of those who died and are still missing were read for 3 days in a candlelight ceremony at the National Cathedral. And the veterans of Vietnam who were never welcomed home with speeches and bands -- but who were never defeated in battle and were heroes as surely as any

who have ever fought in a noble cause -- staged their own parade on Constitution Avenue.

As America watched them, some in wheelchairs, all of them proud, there was a feeling that as a Nation we were coming together again and that we had -- at long last -- welcomed the ^{boys} home.

"A lot of healing . . . went on," said one combat veteran who helped organize support for the memorial. And then there was this newspaper account that appeared after the ceremonies. I would like to read it to you:

"Yesterday, crowds returned to the memorial. Among them was Herbie Petit, a machinist and former marine from New Orleans. 'Last night,' he said, standing near the wall, 'I went out to dinner with some other ex-marines. There was also a group of college students in the restaurant. We started talking to each other and before we left they stood up and cheered.'

'The whole week,' Petit said, his eyes red, 'it was worth it just for that.'"

It has been worth it. We Americans have learned to listen to each other and to trust each other again. We have learned that Government owes the people an explanation and needs their support for its actions at home and abroad. And we have learned -- and I pray this time for good -- the most valuable lesson of all: the preciousness of human freedom. It has been a lesson relearned not just by Americans but by all the people of the world. It is "the stark lesson" that Truong Nhu Tang, one of the founders of the National Liberation Front, a former Viet Cong minister and vice-minister of the postwar government in Vietnam, spoke of recently when he explained why he fled Vietnam for freedom.

"No previous regime in my country," he wrote about the concentration camps and boat people of Vietnam, "brought such numbers of people to such desperation. Not the military dictators, not the colonialists, not even the ancient Chinese overlords. It is a lesson that my compatriots and I learned through witnessing and through suffering in our own lives the fate of our countrymen. It is a lesson that must eventually move the conscience of the world."

Yet while the experience of Vietnam has given the world a stark lesson that ultimately must move the conscience of the world, we must remember that we cannot today -- as much as we might want to -- close this chapter in our history.

For the war in Southeast Asia still haunts a small but brave group of Americans, the families of those still missing in the Vietnam conflict. They live day and night with uncertainty, with an emptiness, with a void we cannot fathom. Today, they sit among you; their feelings are a mixture of pride and fear. They are proud of their sons or husbands who bravely and nobly answered the call of their country, but some of them fear that this ceremony writes a final chapter, leaving ^{their agonizing questions unanswered --} those they loved forgotten. Today, then, one way to honor ^{all} those who served in Vietnam is to gather here and rededicate ourselves to securing the answers for the families of those missing in action. I ask the Members of Congress, the leaders of veterans groups, and the citizens of an entire Nation -- present or listening -- to give these families your help ^{, your prayers} and your support, for they still sacrifice and suffer; Vietnam is not over for them; they cannot rest until they know the fate of those they loved and watched march off to serve their country. Our dedication to their cause must be strengthened with these events today; we write no last chapters, we close no books, we put away no final memories. An

end to America's involvement in Vietnam can not come before we have achieved the fullest possible accounting of those missing in action. This can only happen when their families know with certainty that this Nation discharged her duty to those who served nobly and well. Today, a united people call upon Hanoi with one voice -- heal the sorest wound of this conflict; return our sons to America; end the grief of those who are innocent and undeserving of any retribution.

The unknown soldier who has returned to us today and whom we lay to rest is symbolic of all our missing sons. About him, we may well wonder as others have: As a child, did he play on some street in a great American city, did he work beside his father on a farm in America's heartland? Did he marry? Did he have children, did he look expectantly to return to a bride? We will never know the answers to these questions about his life. We do know, though, why he died. He saw the horrors of war but bravely faced them, certain his own cause and his country's cause was a noble one; that he was fighting for human dignity, for free men everywhere. Today, we pause, to embrace him and all who served us so well in a war whose end offered no parades, no flags, and so little thanks. We can be worthy of the values and ideals for which our sons sacrificed, worthy of their courage in the face of a fear that few of us will ever experience, by honoring their commitment and devotion to duty and country. Many veterans of Vietnam still serve in the Armed Forces, work in our offices, on our farms, in our factories. Most have kept their experiences private, but most have been strengthened by their call to duty.

A grateful Nation opens her heart today in gratitude for their sacrifice, for their courage and their noble service. Let us, if we must, debate the lessons learned at some other time; today we simply say with pride: Thank you, dear son; and may God cradle you in His loving arms.

..

(Dolan)
May 23, 1984
3:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: VIETNAM UNKNOWN SOLDIER ENTOMBMENT
MONDAY, MAY 28, 1984

Memorial Day is a day of ceremonies and speeches. Throughout America today, we honor the dead of our wars. We recall their valor and their sacrifices -- we remember they gave their lives so that others might live.

When he spoke at a ceremony like this at Gettysburg in 1863, President Lincoln reminded us that -- through their deeds -- the dead had spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, and that we the living could only honor them by rededicating ourselves to the cause for which they so willingly gave a last full measure of devotion.

This is especially so today; for in our minds and hearts is the memory of the Vietnam and all that conflict meant for those who sacrificed on the field of battle and for their loved ones who suffered here at home.

Not long ago, when a Memorial was dedicated here in Washington to our Vietnam dead, the events surrounding that dedication were a stirring reminder of America's resilience, of how our Nation could learn and grow and transcend the tragedies of the past.

During the dedication ceremonies, the roles of the dead were read for 3 days in a candlelight ceremony at the National Cathedral. And the veterans of Vietnam who were never welcomed home with speeches and bands -- but who were undefeated in battle

and were heroes as surely as any who have ever fought in a noble cause -- staged their own parade on Constitution Avenue.

As America watched them, some in wheelchairs, all of them proud, there was a feeling that as a Nation we were coming together again and that we had -- at long last -- brought the boys home.

"A lot of healing . . . went on," said one combat veteran who helped organize support for the memorial. And then there was this newspaper account that appeared after the ceremonies. I would like to read it to you:

"Yesterday, crowds returned to the memorial. Among them was Herbie Petit, a machinist and former marine from New Orleans. 'Last night,' he said, standing near the wall, 'I went out to dinner with some other ex-marines. There was also a group of college students in the restaurant. We started talking to each other and before we left they stood up and cheered.'

'The whole week,' Petit said, his eyes red, 'it was worth it just for that.'"

It has been worth it. We Americans have learned again to listen to each other and to trust each other. We have learned that Government owes the people an explanation and needs their support for its actions at home and abroad. And we have learned -- and I pray this time for good -- the most valuable lesson of all: the preciousness of human freedom. It has been a lesson relearned not just by Americans but by all the people of the world. It is "the stark lesson" that Truongs Nhu Tang, one of the founders of the National Liberation Front, a former Viet Cong minister and vice-minister of the postwar government in Vietnam, spoke of recently when he explained why he fled Vietnam for freedom.

"No previous regime in my country," he wrote about the concentration camps and boat people of Vietnam, "brought such numbers of people to such desperation. Not the military dictators, not the colonialists, not even the ancient Chinese overlords. It is a lesson that my compatriots and I learned through witnessing and through suffering in our own lives the fate of our countrymen. It is a lesson that must eventually move the conscience of the world."

Yet while the experience of Vietnam has given the world a stark lesson that ultimately must move the conscience of the world, we must remember that we cannot today -- as much as we might want to -- close this chapter in our history.

For the war in Southeast Asia still haunts a small but brave group of Americans, the families of those still missing in the Vietnam conflict. They live day and night with uncertainty, with a void, with an emptiness that we cannot fathom. Today, they sit among you; their feelings are a mixture of pride and fear. They are proud of their sons or husbands who bravely and nobly answered the call of their country, but they fear that this ceremony writes a final chapter, leaving those they loved forgotten. Today then, one way to gather here and honor those who served in Vietnam is to rededicate ourselves to securing the answers for the families of those missing in action. I ask the Members of Congress, the leaders of veterans' groups, and the citizens of an entire Nation -- present or listening -- to give these families your help and your support; for they still sacrifice and suffer; Vietnam is not over for them; they cannot rest until they know the fate of those they loved and watched go off to serve their country. Our dedication to their cause must not diminish with these events today; we write no last chapters, we close no books, we put away no final memories. An end to

America's involvement in Vietnam can only come when we have achieved the fullest possible accounting of those missing in action, this can only happen when their families know with certainty that this Nation discharged her duty to those who served nobly and well. Today, a united people call upon Hanoi with one voice -- heal the sorest wound of this conflict, return our sons to America, end the grief of those who are innocent and undeserving of any retribution.

The unknown soldier who has returned to us today and whom we lay to rest is symbolic of all our missing sons. About him, We may well wonder as others have: As a child, did he play on some street in a great American city, did he work beside his father on a farm in America's heartland? Did he marry? Did he have children, did he look expectantly to return to a bride? We will never know the answers to these questions about his life. We do know, though, why he died. He saw the horrors of war but bravely faced them, certain his own cause and his country's cause was a noble one; that he was fighting for human dignity, for free men everywhere. Today, we pause, to embrace him and all who served us so well in a war whose end offered no parades, no flags, and so little thanks. We can be worthy of the values and ideals for which our sons sacrificed, worthy of their courage in the face of a fear that few of us will ever experience by honoring their commitment and devotion to duty and country. Many veterans of Vietnam still serve in the armed forces, work in our offices, on our farms, in our factories. Most have kept their experiences private, but most have been strengthened by their call to duty.

A grateful Nation opens her heart today in gratitude for their sacrifice, for their courage and their noble service. Let us, if we must, debate the lessons learned at some other time; today we simply say with pride: Thank you.