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**Collection:** Blackwell, Morton: Files  
**Folder Title:** Vietnam Veterans:  
Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day 04/26/1981  
(1 of 2)  
**Box:** 51

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# WITHDRAWAL SHEET

## Ronald Reagan Library

**Collection Name** BLACKWELL, MORTON: FILES

**Withdrawer**

RBW 8/26/2011

**File Folder** VIETNAM VETERANS: VIETNAM VETERANS  
RECOGNITION DAY 04/26/1981 (1 OF 2)

**FOIA**

F06-0055/07

**Box Number** 51

POTTER, CLAIRE

74

DOC NO	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
1	MEMO	TONY BENEDI TO MORTON BLACWELL RE. PROJECT FOR VIETNAM VETERANS	1	4/7/1981	B6

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Morton-  
FYI!  
CJW

File  
Viet Nam  
Veterans

July 7, 1981

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of June 23.

I appreciate your sending me copies of your recent correspondence with Chase Untermeyer and the articles that you wrote for New West and Texas Monthly. I read your articles with interest and have forwarded them to Elizabeth Dole, Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, as she has been working closely with the various Veterans groups.

Once again, my thanks for your interest in bringing this information to my attention. Hurriedly, but with best regards.

Sincerely,

James A. Baker, III  
Chief of Staff and  
Assistant to the President

Mr. William Broyles, Jr.  
Editor-in-Chief  
New West  
Post Office Box 69990  
Los Angeles, California 90069

✓cc: Elizabeth Dole--FYI

JUL 08 RECD

6/29 Routine thx. for comments ✓

THE MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA  
**NEW WEST**

P.O. BOX 69990  
LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA 90069  
213-273-7516

June 23, 1981

Mr. James A. Baker III  
Assistant to the President and  
Chief of Staff  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Jim:

I have enclosed a letter I sent recently to another official in The White House concerning Viet Nam veterans, along with copies of articles I wrote about the matter in the two magazines I edit, New West and Texas Monthly.

I would hope you would give this matter a bit more thought. The administration is being presented a wonderful opportunity to lay the Viet Nam war to rest, to acknowledge the contribution of its veterans, and to give the idea of military service a well-needed shot in the arm. I hope this opportunity does not develop over the summer into a deep embarrassment, which I believe, handled as it is being handled, it could.

Sincerely,



William Broyles, Jr.  
Editor-in-Chief

enclosures

June 5, 1981

Mr. Chase Untermeyer  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Chase:

Enclosed is a copy of my column from the July issue of New West. I have also enclosed a few clippings from yesterday's local papers.

As I told you on the telephone, it is my belief that the administration is being presented with a superb opportunity to lay the Viet Nam war to rest, an opportunity which could very easily, in the next several weeks, become instead a potentially embarrassing political problem.

The situation is this: the twelve hunger strikers are now in their third week. Two have already been hospitalized (I was there when they collapsed). These are not Gandhian spiritualists; it's more like The Dirty Dozen goes on hunger strike. I have met most of them. They strike me as very decent, very patriotic, and very determined men. Their politics range across the spectrum, but they are united by their frustration in dealing with the Veterans Administration and with their sense of mission in trying to gain some recognition for what they gave to this country.

In my opinion, this small group is striking a very responsive chord. The VA is the epitome of the sort of bureaucratic insensitivity and incompetence against which the President campaigned so well. And as this strike goes on, it also seems to be drawing everyone who reads or hears about it into a feeling that I can only describe as atonement. I have been talking to people from all walks of life all over America, most of them not veterans, and they keep saying we should do something about the people who fought in Viet Nam. The administration should be leading this movement.

What the administration has a chance to do is this:

It can forcefully place itself on the side of millions of veterans in their efforts to gain decent and respectful treatment from a notorious bureaucracy;

- continued -

It can take a tremendous step toward finally bringing home all those Americans whose service for their country has left them crippled in mind or body;

And it can, most importantly, help unite all of us at last about the cause that so divided this country, a reconciliation that I believe the nation sincerely and deeply desires.

How to do this?

I understand perfectly the reluctance to bow to coercion. On the other hand, the problem of having the VA solve this problem is that the VA is the problem -- its credibility is zero. On top of that, the President can hardly adopt Mrs. Thatcher's approach. These men aren't terrorists like Bobby Sands. They are the veterans of this nation's most recent war. Their hunger strike is only going to gain in momentum and publicity. The administration will soon be in a corner where it will clearly be seen as being coerced. At this stage there is still time to seize the initiative, to reach out and embrace the veterans' cause, to close the wound of the war that their demonstration is keeping open.

Let us not forget that a nation mistreats its veterans at its peril. For a decade after General MacArthur drove the World War I veterans out of Washington with the cavalry this nation was able to do virtually nothing against the rise of Hitler to power in Europe. The plight of the Viet Nam veterans, if sufficiently dramatized (as this strike will do), may similarly hamstring the President's efforts to pursue a strong defense policy, particularly when it comes to the recruitment of qualified personnel.

In any case, I have a number of suggestions about how this might be handled, which I would be happy to discuss. I should point out, however, that these hunger strikers are men who risked their lives for their country before. They seem to me quite willing to do it again. I can't understate their idealism -- they aren't after anything for themselves as individuals -- or their courage. I also can't understate how powerful a symbol they are going to become if the administration does not move quickly. Their specific demands are beyond controversy -- better treatment for Agent Orange and delayed stress -- so really the only question is whether the President should acknowledge them and use their presence to embrace the cause of veterans and to bring this war -- finally -- to an end.

- continued -

Mr. Chase Untermeyer

- 3 -

June 5, 1981

As Teddy Roosevelt said, the presidency is a bully pulpit. No president has used it any better than President Reagan. But a president sometimes has to use whatever pulpit is at hand. There is one waiting in West Los Angeles.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Broyles". The signature is stylized with a large, bold "B" and a long, sweeping underline that extends across the name.

William Broyles, Jr.  
Editor-In-Chief

# BEHIND THE LINES

I AM A Viet Nam veteran. I was an infantry lieutenant with the marines in the rice paddies and jungles of I Corps, in the years 1969 and 1970. I did not go because I believed in the war—I didn't—but I did not believe that just because I was educated and middle class I should be able to avoid a burden less privileged Americans were having to bear. Since then I have gone about my life, reasonably untroubled by the experience. But lately I have been thinking about Viet Nam again, about what the war meant, particularly what it meant to veterans not as lucky as I was, veterans who still bear the physical or mental scars of that very unusual war, veterans who went to the wrong war but for all the right reasons, veterans who need their country every bit as much now as their country once needed them.

As I write this column, a small group of demonstrators is entering the third week of a hunger strike at the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration hospital. The catalyst of the demonstration was a Viet Nam veteran named James Hopkins. Hopkins had many of the symptoms—hearing loss, blackouts, flashbacks to the war, mysterious ailments, an inability to do sustained work—that Viet Nam veterans associate with the toxic herbicide Agent Orange (also linked to cancer and birth defects) and with the delayed stress syndrome, the time bomb ticking inside some combat veterans for whom the war has never ended. Hopkins tried several times to convince the VA his problems were caused by his service in Viet Nam, but was turned down. Then one day in March—fulfilling a fantasy common to Viet Nam veterans—he dressed in combat gear, drove a jeep through the hospital doors, and sprayed the ceiling with an M-16. Two months later, he was dead. After Hopkins's death, veterans began converging on Los Angeles. I look in their faces and I see the emotions, right on the surface, that I have long buried deep inside. I have not seen such determination, such courage, such unity of purpose, such simple human love, since the war. They are men on one last mission, a mission to rescue their buddies from captivity, to free the Viet Nam hostages. They want better counseling, Agent Orange research and treatment, and recognition of the delayed stress syndrome. They also want President Reagan to meet with them. If he really believes Viet Nam was a "noble cause," they ask, "then what about us?"

I'm sure that it's often hard to imagine what these veterans are so mad about. After all, the war has been over for years. Why can't they just join the American Legion like everybody else? But Viet Nam was a different sort of war. Only a few of us



[MARINES MEMORIAL SERVICE, DA NANG, 1969]

*"In my mind, in the minds of thousands of Viet Nam veterans across America, one word began to form. That word was: sucker."*

ended up having to fight. Most Americans avoided military service, and even most military men avoided combat. That was particularly true for the colonels and generals—our commanders—who passed the war in permanent houses, catered to by servants, eating splendid food flown in fresh from the Philippines and Japan. We had no support from the proverbial folks back home—in fact, because the war was so hated, we were hated, to the point that many veterans remember fearing for their lives as they went through airports in uniform on their way home. An amputee tells this story: "I had just got home, and a girl came up to me and asked how I lost my leg. 'Viet Nam,' I said. 'Serves you right,' she replied, and walked off."

That's why it hurt to see the welcome the Iranian hostages were given, particularly when Viet Nam veterans thought about their own homecomings—stranded outside the troop center, spit on in public places, or left, as I was, to find my own way to the Los Angeles airport. I remember walking the streets of Georgetown in Washington, D.C., dressed in my PX chinos and wearing my jungle boots (the only shoes I had). At first I felt self-conscious—I wanted my hair to be longer, I wanted to have on bell-bottom blue jeans. I wanted, in short, to deny to the world I had ever been there. But then I realized that what I took to be embarrassment was nothing of the sort—I was, quite simply, invisible.

I have been trying, since then, to forget

about Viet Nam. I didn't have time to dwell on it. Almost everyone else I had known before the war was almost three years ahead of me. They had gone to law school or medical school or to Washington to work. They had good jobs and families, and I had some jungle boots and a seabag full of souvenirs. No one—no one—I knew in college or at Oxford went to Viet Nam. In my mind, as it did in the minds of thousands of veterans across America, one word began to form, taking shape slowly over the years. That word was: *sucker*.

I first felt that way in Viet Nam. We had spent the day humping up and down muddy mountains, fighting our way through dense thickets of razor sharp elephant grass, hacking down walls of bamboo, and had finally dug into a position on a hilltop overlooking a river about twenty miles east of Da Nang. Our mission was to harass the units that were launching rocket attacks on the Da Nang area and the huge concentrations of noncombat American troops there. We were sitting quietly around our foxholes eating cold C rations and trying to pick leeches off our bodies when my battalion commander came over the radio and ordered me to send a patrol across the river to locate a team of North Vietnamese Army troops (NVA) who had fired rockets into my division's headquarters area near Da Nang.

I passed the word to my squad leaders that Da Nang was being rocketed, an event that to me, since I was new in Viet Nam, seemed calamitous—as if I were hearing that Coventry was being bombed, or Pearl Harbor being attacked. My squad leaders, however, were overjoyed, and as the news spread through our little hilltop, cheers went up, cheers from Mexican kids from the barrios, from black kids from Mississippi and Watts, from Chicago ethnics, from mountain kids, all dressed in rotted fatigues and covered with sores. They cheered because those Americans lolling around the great base cities in the rear were the symbols of the war's unfairness; they had everything we did not, and we also were convinced they didn't care about us.

That was the Viet Nam combat veteran's lesson: *you are alone, no one else shares your experience or cares about it*. Only your buddies matter. And so there grew up throughout Viet Nam, in the combat units, a sense of commitment—yes, love, among the men who lived, fought, suffered, and died together. Patriotism may have been part of it in the beginning, back in the world with family and girlfriends around, but in Viet Nam patriotism didn't matter—it was irrelevant. You took your turn on point, pushing into the terrible unknown of the jungle, you

By William Broyles, Jr.



went up the hill under fire, you crawled out to bring back your wounded, you did what soldiers in combat do not for your country: you did it for your buddies.

In Viet Nam the sense of friendship within combat units was intensified by the nature of the war. With few exceptions, Viet Nam was a war fought by companies and platoons. There were no large operations, no dramatic pushes to the Rhine, no strategy of any kind in which the individual could feel a part of anything but his own little section of the map. Our platoon's mission quickly became a special one, unrelated to any command from higher up: our mission was to survive. When, for example, a major, drunk after a long night of carousing with female Filipino singers, ordered me to send patrols out into a territory infested with NVA, we simply faked the patrols on our radios, talking to each other a few feet away as if we were crossing rivers, climbing hills, taking up positions, and so on. We weren't going to risk our lives for him. It was that simple. For each other, yes, we would. But that was because each other was all we had. We had no country to fight for. Our country was ashamed of us, hated us. We were alone, as alone as so many Viet Nam veterans feel today.

Viet Nam was not a proud chapter in our nation's history: celebrations are not in order. But there is an innocence about this country, a lack of understanding about, and a freedom from, the true burdens of history. Here are the facts: we sent almost 3 million young Americans to war there, and 57,000 of them didn't come home. More than a quarter million were wounded, a hundred thousand disabled. As much as we would like to forget all that, we can't just pick up and move on, leaving the human wreckage behind, the way the pioneers would leech out the earth and then move west.

I can still see the men in my platoon. They were the harvest of the American heartland, kids whose average age could not have been more than twenty. Some of them died, and they deserve a memorial more fitting than the hurt that still dwells in the hearts of their families. As it happens, some veterans are trying to raise money for a Viet Nam memorial in Washington, D.C., that would contain the names of everyone who died in the war. Donations can be sent to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 37240, Washington, DC 20013.

But our main responsibility is to the living. Many veterans still need help. They could use jobs, medical care, understanding, and support. They could use a national effort, led by the president, to make the VA responsive to their special needs. And they could also use, these many years later, a belated word of thanks. We owe them much more than we could ever give, but at the very least we could begin by treating them with decency and respect. I was there. I know they deserve it. ■

# WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

*Collection Name*

BLACKWELL, MORTON: FILES

*Withdrawer*

RB 8/26/2011  
W

*File Folder*

VIETNAM VETERANS: VIETNAM VETERANS RECOGNITION  
DAY 04/26/1981 (1 OF 2)

*FOIA*

F06-0055/07  
POTTER, CLAIRE

*Box Number*

51

74

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*DOC Document Type*

*NO Document Description*

*No of Doc Date Restriction*  
*pages* *ations*

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1 MEMO

1 4/7/1981 B6

TONY BENEDI TO MORTON BLACWELL RE.  
PROJECT FOR VIETNAM VETERANS

---

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

**MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL**

TO:

*Morton*

YOU WERE CALLED BY—  YOU WERE VISITED BY—

*Ed Weese's off*

OF (Organization)

*Manlee*

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. ~~2235~~ *2235*  FTS  
CODE/EXT.

WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*Urgent*

*Jordan Panel  
please*

RECEIVED BY

DATE

TIME

63-109

U.S. G.P.O. 1980-311-156/16

STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76)  
Prescribed by GSA  
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

Mr. G. Hamel  
309 Yoakum Parkway  
1411 Alexandria, VA.  
22304

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 2, 1981

To: Marilee Melvin  
Mr. Meese's Office  
x2235

From: Morton Blackwell's Office

We spoke with Mr. Hamel about the Vietnam Veterans project. It sounds very good, but we would like more information on how they are going to handle the money, and who will be responsible for it.

*file  
Vietnam  
Veterans  
copy sent to  
MR. Hamel on request.  
4-3-81*

*Do nothing with this appointment  
until you talk directly with me and  
then Marilee, please*

*Marilee  
April 6, 1981*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

26 March 1981

*Teeg,  
Please  
call  
& see  
what Mr.  
Hamel  
is  
doing.  
MB*

NOTE FOR MORTON BLACKWELL

FROM: MARILEE MELVIN *Melvin*  
Mr. Meese's Office  
x2235

Could you follow up with Mr. Hamel for Ed Meese? He wants to explain his project for Vietnam Veterans to someone. He is currently working at GSA, though he says this is a privately generated project.

Let us know how we should handle this if he calls us back.

Thanks.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

25 March 1981

NOTES FOR ED THOMAS

FROM: MARILEE MELVIN

SUBJECT: Notes from the Day

Gordon Hamel (currently with the General Services Administration) wants to talk to Mr. Meese -- or you -- or someone designated -- to talk about a proposal, using White House influence, corporations, entertainment and the media, to put unemployed Vietnam Veterans to work; the funding will be kept for counseling services and for the construction of a national war memorial. They are seeking White House influence for the project by a sanction for their efforts to reach major corporations to fund/support the project. This sanctioning might come by statement or appearance of White House staff. He believes it has some political benefits for the White House.

Hamel is doing this project in conjunction with another individual; though he works at GSA it is not a government project.

Telephone numbers: 275-6118 (office) or 573-3684 (home)

- Set up meeting with Ed Meese
- Set up meeting with Ed Thomas
- Refer to Morton Blackwell on Eliz. Dole's staff

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Kim Splain

Jr. Wyatt

Parkersburg, W. Va.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Joint  
H. Res. - 182

Nick Longworth  
W. H. prepares proclamation  
to be signed by Pres  
OMB approves implementing  
agency & dollar budget  
Natl Recognition Day  
for Veterans of Vietnam  
Era.

To Mocton or -

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

M. Don Billingsly

of \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 224-8837

Area Code      Number      Extension

TELEPHONED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	URGENT	

RETURNED YOUR CALL

Message From Senator  
Riegle office of mech  
Billingsly wants info  
on Veterans Parade

Operator H.

EFFICIENCY® LINE NO. 4725 AN AMPAD PRODUCT

Cathy Chintman -  
609-393-1979  
2657





THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Col. Don Schaet - <sup>et V.P.</sup>  
659 - 2490

Vietnam Vet Memorial Fund Inc.

April 26 -

met with bill staffers  
April 2, and his perception is  
that nobody is in charge  
& thinks the White House should  
take charge.

10 AM Mon 304  
Cannon Bldg.

Don't want a jingle do get publicity for it  
Thank you <sup>gladly</sup> <sup>concern</sup>  
2 Vietnam vets walking from  
Jackson, Ill to Wash. D.C.

W.H. invite to these men  
to come to eclipse & other  
Vietnam veterans.

Natl Day of observance  
April 26. - Sunday  
from 20th + to 26th testimony  
on Capital Hill

"The Forgotten Brigade"  
Post Commander.  
John Hembrough  
217-245-7777 will have  
245-9009 names + schedule  
243-1896 of vets.  
Bill O Sullivan, Jr. 15th St. S.  
201-826-8600(w) 254-7484(h)

MEMORANDUM OF CALL

TO: *Magell*  
 YOU WERE CALLED BY—  YOU WERE VISITED BY—  
*Bill O. Sullivan*  
OF (Organization)  
 PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. *901-826-5600*  FTS  
 WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU  
 RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE  
*Paul Egan*  
*Asst Dir of*  
*American Legion*  
*861-2700*

RECEIVED BY *Law* DATE *4/14* TIME *3:22*  
63-109 STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76)  
U.S. G.P.O. 1980-311-156/16 Prescribed by GSA  
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

MEMORANDUM OF CALL

TO: *Morton or Masillo*  
 YOU WERE CALLED BY—  YOU WERE VISITED BY—  
*Don Jura of Cong. Brewster*  
OF (Organization)  
*Office of Mem.*  
 PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. *54806*  FTS  
 WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU  
 RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE  
*Cong. Brewster asked*  
*him to call re having*  
*something done by the*  
*W.H. for Veterans Day*  
*which is April 30*

RECEIVED BY *LF* DATE *4/7* TIME *4:15*  
63-109 STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76)  
U.S. G.P.O. 1980-311-156/16 Prescribed by GSA  
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

*Bill was not passed until*  
*Apr. 1st*  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Pres has not*  
*signed legislation*  
*Also at*  
*Joint Res. 182 OMB*

*Draft Proclamation*  
*sent to OMB*  
*General Council's office*  
*Wm. Nichols*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*National Recognition*  
*Day for Veterans*  
*of Vietnam Era*  
*Action: Proclamation*  
*by April 20-26*

MEMORANDUM OF CALL

have proclamation read on 26th

TO: Marseille

YOU WERE CALLED BY—  YOU WERE VISITED BY—

Mike Marutiak

OF (Organization)

225-3561

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. CODE/EXT.  FTS

WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

resolution calls on the Pres to initiate some activity. Vet. & Defense have agreed to go forth on this, but need some response from W.H. ~~Estimate~~ parades/sign proclamation

RECEIVED BY

H

DATE

4/17

TIME

10:25

63-109

STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76) Prescribed by GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

U.S. G.P.O. 1980-311-156/16

Friday meeting 10 A.M. 311 Cannon

MEMORANDUM OF CALL

TO: Marseille

YOU WERE CALLED BY—  YOU WERE VISITED BY—

Mathew Mr. Coscalotto

OF (Organization)

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. CODE/EXT. 225-3861  FTS

WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

With Congressman ?? sounded like Panetta. (D) Calif.

RECEIVED BY

H.

DATE

4/6

TIME

12:48

63-109

STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76) Prescribed by GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

U.S. G.P.O. 1980-311-156/16

To: Morton

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M. Michel Marutiak of Albosta's office

Phone 225-3561

Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	URGENT	

RETURNED YOUR CALL

Message re Vietnam

Veterans Recognition Day - There will be another meeting this Friday. He would like to talk with you about attending the meeting

Operator

To \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M. Jack Longworth of Harry Donahue

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	URGENT	

RETURNED YOUR CALL

Message 389-2267

389-2674

Operator

House  
Mike or Theresa (Ryan/Kuegan)  
Matthew Cosolito Panetta (Daschle)  
Dan Bolognese - Sen Riegle  
Janice Cooper - Sen. Mathias  
Am. Legion - Paul Egan  
Vietnam  
Vets Memorial Fund

Re April 26 -  
Cong Panetta is  
Vice Chairman of  
Caucus of Vietnam Era  
Veterans  
Tom Daschle  
Chairman

Who has OMB designated  
to be responsible for  
this day proclamation  
etc.

goes to OMB  
because it is  
legislation

To Moston

Date Apr 3 Time \_\_\_\_\_

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

M. Theresa Bourgeois

of Don Albosta

Phone 225-3561

Area Code      Number      Extension

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	URGENT	

RETURNED YOUR CALL

Message write with  
trying to hunt for banks,  
OPD, on Vietnam Vets memorial  
meeting day  
Cannon room 311 10 A.M.  
Monday -

389-2482 David Cole V. A.  
Operator

Philip Geyelin

3/23/81  
6078 Merton Blackwell  
br  
wv

## A 'Noble Cause' Lost?

Much has been made, and quite rightly, of the Reagan administration's decision to shut down some 91 "storefront" counseling centers for Vietnam veterans across the country. But that is only the first wave of the assault on Vietnam War veterans by David Stockman's Office of Management and Budget.

As if by the most careful calculation, OMB has gone through the federal budget and neatly excised programs of the Labor and Education departments, as well as the Veterans Administration, specifically designed to help those who served in the military in the Vietnam years. Marked for extinction are efforts to hire the disabled; to find jobs for the unemployed; to promote education and vocational training; to deal with psychological readjustment; to ease the anxiety and provide medical attention for those fearful of exposure to the toxic effects of the dreaded herbicide Agent Orange.

Says one Vietnam veteran advocate in the Labor Department: "It's a wipeout of the only benefits that we were able to get in all of the last 10 years." Total savings: \$70 million—less than one percent of total VA outlays.

Now where, you might ask, does this special pleading fit into a column regularly devoted to foreign policy and matters having to do with national security? I would turn to President Reagan's own spoken record to make the connection.

"Because our national security is so dependent upon the people in our armed forces, we must do all in our power to assure that they are of the highest caliber," Reagan told the American Legion last year, in mid-campaign. "The key to building and retaining effective military forces is to encourage people to pursue a career in the services of their choice."

One way to "attract and retain superior people," he went on, is "to restore the GI Bill, one of the most effective, equitable and socially important programs ever devised."

True to his word, the president is supporting a new peacetime GI Bill to provide education and other benefits for the military veterans of the future. But in the very same budget he would strip away a provision that would have extended for another two years the expiration date of GI Bill education benefits for those who served in the time of the Vietnam War.

That is precisely the part of the connection between national security and public policy on the treatment accorded Vietnam veterans that the president and his budget-cutters can't seem to make. In their efforts to make military service more attractive, respectable, honorable—to lay to rest that part of the so-called Vietnam syndrome—the government

would dangle the carrot of aid to education and other compensation for time lost and service rendered. The hope would be to avoid having to use the stick of conscription.

But just how enticing is that carrot likely to look to potential volunteers when, at the same time, comparable benefits for the most recent generation of veterans are among the first items singled out for budget cuts in a government economy drive?

You think the present generation of potential veterans won't notice? Perhaps. But it won't be for lack of effort by the Vietnam veterans, already thoroughly aroused by Stockman's handiwork. Their numbers, you could say, are relatively small: Some 9 million men and women were in uniform in the Vietnam years, of which about 2.6 million actually served in the combat zone. And it is often said that the Vietnam experience for most veterans was, in fact, not all that much more stressful than in other wars.

But more than enough respected psychologists and psychiatrists have come up with persuasive evidence that just as the war was distinctively destructive, so was its emotional impact on many of those who were caught up in it and its aftereffects.

Last year, in his famous defense of the Vietnam effort as a "noble cause," Reagan was at pains to note that "we have been shabby in our treatment of those who returned." Last month, hailing their valor, he talked of Vietnam veterans, not as having been "defeated" but as having been "denied permission to win."

Does it not occur to him that this experience alone must have taken some considerable emotional and psychiatric toll?

Psychologist John Wilson, director of a definitive study, "The Forgotten Warrior," argues that "appallingly few psychiatric people know anything about Vietnam veterans—they are misdiagnosed, mistreated." He estimates there are a half-million or so alienated Vietnam veterans beyond the reach of conventional VA medical help.

Hence the 91 VA "outreach centers" in modest, unforbidding storefronts, manned largely by fellow Vietnam veterans. Those are the community-based operations David Stockman would disband, on the ground that the established facilities of the federal government can do the job.

That is not only "shabby." It is also an invitation for a "single issue" political outcry that, however indirectly, cannot help having serious repercussions for the military services—and, by extension, for national security.

Preservation Copy

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

26 March 1981

TO: MORTON BLACKWELL

FROM: MARILEE MELVIN *pm*

For your information:

We received a call from Michael King from a Vietnam Veterans group in Boston (617) 522-4098 or (617) 566-7984, to remind us that Sunday, March 29th was the first Vietnam Veterans Day in the country, and would like a Presidential message -- they have requested same by letter.

*please  
do not  
Presidential  
Call +  
Set their  
addresses.  
then  
draft  
message*



MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL

TO:

*Morton*

YOU WERE CALLED BY—  YOU WERE VISITED BY—

*Bill O'Sullivan*

OF (Organization)

*201-826-8600*

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. CODE/EXT.  FTS

WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*wants to release info  
about this to NY Times +  
wants Reagan  
administration behind  
- mem -*

RECEIVED BY

DATE

TIME

63-109

U.S. G.P.O. 1980-311-156/16

STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76)  
Prescribed by GSA  
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

Tony

April 26<sup>th</sup>

Politically  
this is  
important  
because  
Reagle  
is trying to  
get credit  
- a Dem.

Vietnam Veterans

Recognition Day -

he's a  
good Rep. &  
man for  
congress

Bill o' Sullivan -

201-826-8600

he is the organizer  
I know him  
personally + he  
will make this  
a big media  
event - very  
successful

this can be handled through

Cong. Chris Smith's office - →

through Marty Darnesfeld

202-225-3765 ←

They will be walking to Washington  
from all over the country -  
and want the Pres. to greet  
them -

These Vietnam Veterans  
need this for emotional  
support

this will be a galvanic  
event that Vietnam  
veterans can point to  
as black people pointed  
to in 1960's

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Vietnam Veterans  
The Forgotten Brigade  
(file)

Dear Morten -  
Attached is memo  
we spoke of on the phone -  
If you would kindly  
call these gentlemen & hear  
them out I believe it would  
be productive - Thanks,  
Ray

file -  
Viet Nam  
Veterans

Forgotten Brigade  
5 Sherbone Place  
Sayreville, N.J. 08872

February 17, 1981

President Ronald Reagan  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

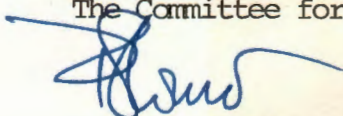
This is for your immediate review. We believe we have your support.  
("Theirs was a noble cause.")

We will be in touch via other channels but felt an obligation to alert  
you to a forthcoming event to which your attendance will be requested.

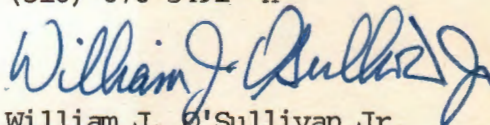
Our feeling is that this effort will not only rectify an inequity but will  
further enhance a wonderful sense of America currently in resurgence. We  
recognize your already substantial contributions in this regard.

Sincerely,

The Committee for the Forgotten Brigade



Phillip S. Como  
(212) 751-7065 -O-  
(516) 676-3491 -H-



William J. O'Sullivan Jr.  
(201) 826-8600 -O-  
(201) 254-7484 -H-

THE FORGOTTEN BRIGADE

A HOMECOMING

## I THE EVENT

On the 26th of April 1981, America will have the opportunity at long last, to welcome home her sons - who willingly served, with honor and distinction, in a conflict for whose origin they had no responsibility.

That they served is a fact; that they were, in great measure, ignored and even vilified, for their actions is reprehensible, particularly when future generations may be called to serve and are presented with this historical scar on the national psyche.

These several million came out of the fabric of American life, from cities, from farms, from ghettos, from all over the place that was built and protected by previous generations of citizen soldiers just like them. They straggled back to America and, mostly, weaved again into the fabric. But 55,000 of them are eternal footnotes to what many Americans at home were calling a silly mistake. And hundreds of thousands of others suffer on today... in pain, psychological and physical, largely in silence, confusion and bitterness.

We believe that America would gladly embrace the opportunity to welcome her Vietnam Veterans back in a national gesture of appreciation.

On an ordinary Sunday in April, this forgotten brigade will come home. They are proud of their commitment to America and, we think, America will pay homage to these ordinary citizens whose common virtue was duty.

## II HOW IT HAPPENS

### A. Full page advertisement in major metropolitan newspapers

- Alerts Vietnam veterans and the nation to the forthcoming event and its purpose
- Establishes a communication outlet via an 800 phone number
- Solicits donations for the event and for veterans' aid (Specific financial use to be determined)
- Keys additional media participation (radio, television, newspaper)

### B. National volunteer network

- A volunteer system in each of the 50 states to inform Vietnam veterans of their role in the march (when they should be in New York City, attire, order of march, accomodations, etc.)

For example: The veterans call the 800 number, are asked what state they are from, and are given a state number to call for specific instructions.

## III THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN TODAY AND APRIL

### A. Money - seed money for advertising, phone and office is essential.

Approximately \$100,000 will be needed.

### B. Tighter organization and support. We need unanimity and cooperation between all official veterans' groups. This is a one time effort and completely apolitical. Accordingly, support should be a matter of obligation not opportunism and a common effort in all respects.

### C. Execution of details.

- A parade permit
- A response by the media
- Guests of honor; gold star parents
- official recognition



ATTENTION VIETNAM VETERANS AND AMERICANS THAT WANT TO REMEMBER THEM

It is 1981 and Vietnam is a long time ago for America. But for the Vietnam veteran it is an enigma. He was, and is, ignored -- except in Hollywood where he is portrayed as bizarre.

Who are they? Your sons, your fathers, your friends, your sisters. They went when they were called and served proudly and well, just like Americans always did. The very best this country had went to a place that changed us all. When they came home, America was trying to forget Vietnam. The process worked, but America forgot the Vietnam veteran.

We think, given the climate of the times, our nation would like to welcome the Vietnam veteran back.

On April 26, this FORGOTTEN BRIGADE, your Vietnam Veterans, will assemble in New York and finally come home.

This takes money. We'd like a \$1.00 check from everyone who supports the effort to be sent to the Forgotten Brigade. c/o

Vietnam Veterans may call 1-800-000-0000 for instructions.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO BE RUN IN THE FOLLOWING NEWSPAPERS:

- 1) New York Times
- 2) Chicago Tribune
- 3) Philadelphia Enquirer
- 4) Boston Globe
- 5) Los Angeles Times
- 6) Dallas Fort Worth
- 7) Atlanta Constitution
- 8) Washington Post

Forgotten Brigade  
5 Sherbone Place  
Sayreville, N.J. 08872

February 17, 1981

President Ronald Reagan  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington D.C.

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