



* * Special Edition * *

A Long Overdue Letter To Servicemen In Vietnam From "The Silent Millions"

(The following open letter appeared in a full page ad in the Chicago TRIBUNE on October 20, and is reproduced here in full. It is believed that the convictions expressed here are of sufficient importance that everyone associated with the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division should have the opportunity to read them.)

Today must be a sad day in Vietnam--

Because today, we are ashamed to admit, some of your own countrymen are marching on Washington.

The marchers' sponsoring group has announced: "We will shut down the Pentagon. We will fill the hallways and block the entrances. Thousands of people will disrupt the center of the American war machine."

It must be a little discomfoting for you fellows ducking sniper bullets in the rice paddies to learn that some of your "fellow Americans" are trying to foul things up at your headquarters.

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You must wonder what the folks back home really think.

This letter is to let you know that MOST of us are WITH you--100%.

We want you to know that you are not the forgotten men.

You are in our thoughts every day.

You may not realize this, because normally we don't spout our feelings, in fact, we are atypical of the Silent Millions of NON-demonstrators--those who back you with quiet concern and prayerful pride. We are painfully aware of the personal sacrifices you are making for the

cause of liberty.

For a long time we've been meaning to write to you --but haven't. Finally, this march on Washington did it. We've decided we could no longer remain silent on the sidelines.

Those who are marching in protest, those who desecrate our flag, those who burn draft cards --all make a lot of noise. They also make the headlines. And they present to the world a distorted picture of America. But, thank God, they are not typical.

At best they are a misguided minority whom we'll just have to ask you to defend along

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with the rest of us. Granted, the motives of some of these people may be pure. But they seem to think they have a unique right to protest in any way they take a notion--with faint respect for fellow citizens or servicemen, for their elected authorities, or even for others' opinions.

There is room for honest differences and doubts, but when demonstrations stir up sabotage, vandalism, and violence parading under the banner of rightful dissent, they threaten to tear our country apart.

These protesters act as if they're the only ones who possess any morality. But we all have a conscience. And it might not be too surprising to find that some of us ordinary guys have even a little more conscience than some of the sign bearers.

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Let's face it. NOBODY we know wants war.

EVERYBODY we know hates war.

EVERYBODY we know wishes this war were over.

EVERYBODY we know wants you home as soon as possible.

We can't think of one person who enjoys war.

We don't.

Our friends don't.

Obviously, the protesters don't.

You don't, that's for sure. Yet--some of these people call you names like "murderers" and "hired killers," implying that you're having a sadistic field day.

Government officials don't enjoy war either. So it's ridiculous for anyone to chant vulgarities like: "Hey, hey, LBJ--how many kids did you kill today?"

But there's one thing that all of us do enjoy.

That's the FREEDOM of the most fortunate land in the world. It is an historic privilege to be a free citizen of America. This freedom is part of the heritage we cherish and for which we have and always will pay any price, including our lives.

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Despite our country's admitted shortcomings, most of us wouldn't trade places--or systems--with the people of any other country.

Most of us are grateful to the brave men of other generations who have fought and died to preserve this priceless freedom.

Most of us today are humbly indebted to you and to our sons and brothers and husbands and fathers who are fighting--and dying--in Viet Nam for freedom. And for us.

Yes, the majority of Americans love America and the American way.

Even the protesters enjoy their unearned freedom--although they might not admit it. They're too busy shouting about the virtues of "the other side."

But no one knows better than you about "the other side."

* * * * *

You know--and we do, too--that international communism is determined to obliterate us and enslave the world. Communism must be contained. This is vital to our world, our lives, our future, and our children.

You know--and we do, too--that Hanoi's blind hunger for subjugation of the free people of Viet Nam has made peace ne-

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gotiations impossible to date, even with several bombing pauses.

You know--and we do, too--that "the other side" has deliberately assassinated and tortured many, many more innocent civilians in the South than our air raids have accidentally killed near military targets in the North.

You know--and we do, too--that if you and your companions were to leave Viet Nam today, the iron hand of Communism would clamp down tomorrow. And South Viet Nam would become another East Germany -- another cowed Cuba.

You know--and we do, too--that your presence in South Viet Nam is a guarantee to freedom-loving people everywhere that they will not be forgotten. And so a remarkable number of you have evidently re-enlisted to return to Viet Nam.

You know--and we do, too--that a strong stand in Viet Nam by the champions of human rights reduces the chances of a larger war. And it is holding off communist take-overs of other nations in southeast Asia.

You know--and we do, too--that appeasement has never worked and never will.

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IN BEHALF OF THE SILENT MILLIONS, (SIGNED BY) WALLY PHILLIPS OF WGN-TV AND OVER 3,500 CITIZENS OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE COST OF THIS LETTER.

We hope that all who read this letter over here and feel the way we feel will do three things:

1. We hope they'll tear out this page--and airmail it to you maybe with a letter of their own --to give you a bit of moral encouragement.

2. We hope they'll write letters -- and express their points of view to their Government Officials, to their friends and relatives, and to all the news media.

3. We hope they'll speak up --and quit apologizing for how much they love this country. Get off the defensive. On to the offensive.

We believe that when sound-thinking people want to say something, they should say it. When they want to do something they should do it.

If more solid citizens would speak out to the protesters, perhaps we could even set them straight.

We believe that the time is here for the voice of responsible patriotism to be heard.

The sooner this is done and the sooner we present a united front, the sooner you'll be coming home from a peaceful Viet Nam.

The Bronco Bugle is published weekly under the supervision of the Information Office of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, APO SF 96355 and is an authorized publication. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. This newspaper uses the facilities of the ARMED FORCES NEWS BUREAU and ARMY NEWS FEATURES. COL George E. Wear.....Commanding Officer 1LT Paul E. Armstrong Jr.....Information Officer SP4 John F. Coie.....Editor