



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

RESERVE AFFAIRS

Mr. Jan Scruggs  
President  
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.  
Suite 1100  
1511 K Street  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Jan:

Since you initiated this little drill, simpatico requires that I end it with a deserved response.

1. I again must disappoint your (yes) pathetic fixation that I care about you in any way, shape or form, Jan. I really, honestly, cross-my-heart, do not care whether you received the Army Commendation Medal with "V." As for your comment regarding "cocky platoon leaders," I know that you have often publicly expressed your hatred for your officers, but that is your own problem. My men nominated me for every award I received. If we were on better terms, I might have invited you to my swearing-in ceremony, where a good number of them were in attendance. If platoon commanders (Marine Corps officers commanded platoons) were cocky in the right way, they saved lives.

Furthermore, I have a hard time believing that a man who would think so much of having received an ARCOM "V" that he mentioned it on radio talk shows and sent people photos of his ceremony would have "not cared" about "another award for gallantry." But if you say so, fine.

2. I have no idea how much you were able to make on my name, or whether my name gave you credibility among others who came on your Sponsoring Committee. Ross Perot and James Bond Stockdale, among others, indicated to me that my name was important to their decision to affiliate with VVMF. Ross Perot, as I recall, made you a lot of money at a very critical time.

With respect to our (successful) search for a compromise, I would refer you first to my letter of September, 1981, which followed up my dozens of phone calls between May and that time, and which as I recall indicated that the Memorial would not be complete without a flag, a permanently lit area, and something that indicates the implements of war. But even by that time you had jammed the design through the Fine Arts Commission without so much as a simple notification of those who had worked to pass the legislation, so normal conversation became impossible, didn't it?

3. You elevate yourself to the height of absurdity when you fantasize that you could have blocked my appointment. First, you tried like hell and you know it. Friends of mine at the highest positions of the Washington Post, in the White House, and at DoD General Counsel indicated to me in great detail what you were attempting. This is not easy to forgive, and in my opinion I was being rather fair when I termed you and your friend "pathetic" in the Post. Second, do you really delude yourself that you have that sort of credibility? Senator Warner himself introduced me to the Senate Armed Services Committee. We did not even mention the VVMF during my courtesy call beforehand. VVMF is hardly the gut issue in this town that you would like to make it, Jan.

4. With respect to the design, I am satisfied with it. As I indicated before, it was a compromise that could have been reached rather easily, if the VVMF had been led by a Chairman of the Board and a President who were capable, rather than paranoid.

5. Regarding my alleged "attacks," I must again say that I did not initiate this correspondence, that I honestly do not care what happens to you, Wheeler, or the VVMF itself, and that if you succeed or fail in your professional life it will have nothing to do with me. I am weary of being the individual upon whom you fixate all of your fears and failures. As I said in my last letter, go live your life, Jan. The Memorial is built, the debate is done, and there aren't ten people in the United States who really give a damn any more about who didn't like whom in the making of it.

Sincerely,



James H. Webb, Jr.