

all come home a bit more healed, and by "all", I mean all Americans, for we all, in a very profound way, are Vietnam veterans. The awful agony endured by our families in some ways surpasses our own. The long heartfelt memory of all mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, and especially those that waited forever, gives all of us, a most self-critical nation, the title of Vietnam veterans. Let then the memorial be as open as possible for all of our experience, so we all might heal a little more and heal together. This is why I support Proposal "A".

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Anyone else?

MR. BERG: Mr. Chairman, at the risk of either having no audience or an audience that is already stoned, I will be as brief as I can.

I have asked that a letter I wrote to The Washington Post be passed around to you.

My name is Christian Berg, as the letter states. I am a practicing lawyer in Washington, and a Vietnam veteran of three combat tours in Vietnam. I was there from late '63 to early '66.

I would draw your attention to the second, third, and

fourth paragraphs. They seem to be, to me, an eloquent footnote to an eloquent statement from the gentleman who just preceded me.

I don't favor any particular proposal. As a matter of fact, I could say I agree with everything that has been said here today. But I think that what I say in my letter transcends the political and emotional rhetorical debate that you have been subjected to all of these months, and especially this morning. The fundamental problem for those of us who experienced the war, especially this war, is that the experience is personal. It is highly personal, and in this war there has been no opportunity to bring it out of what is essentially a personal weight of enormous impact on our lives.

What I describe seeing at this memorial has recurred a dozen times since the first time I have been there, since they took down the fence.

I will tell you a story, if I am able to emotionally. A friend of mine and I encountered each other the morning the fence came down. He is a man in his late 50's, a veteran since the Second World War, a career military officer, probably the archetype of a saber-rattling warrior. I encountered him shortly after dawn the morning the fence came down, walking the path. We hadn't seen each other in about ten years.

He came up to me, and we recognized each other, and there was a good deal of "how are you; where have you been, what has been happening", and he turned and he looked at that wall and he put his hands on it and he started to cry.

I suggest to you that you need not have the wisdom of a Solomon in your decision, and I suggest to you that you don't bleed the baby, and I suggest to you that that single experience is reflected in the experience of thousands of people who go through that monument every day, whether they were there or not there, and that has to be preserved, and whether there be a flag or a statue really is beside the point. The political debate is beside the point. The debate among experts or amateurs as to artistic merit or political necessity is really beside the point. That is a memorial not only to those of us who suffered and who continue to suffer, that is a place in which the rancor that you have heard this morning finds resolution, and I support no proposal in particular; I simply ask that you keep in your minds the impact that it has now. It works, it does what it is supposed to do, and I hope that for the generations who come later, who did not understand Vietnam, who will never comprehend what those of us who lived here during that time went through, that it will continue to provide the same sort of experience, the

same sort of human reconciliation which is so desperately needed and which has been so lacking in the last two hours of this hearing.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

MR. BENDER: Could I have 60 seconds, literally? I am John Bender, one of the volunteers you have heard described today. I put in about 120 hours at the Memorial, and I have just one thing to tell you; that is, I always receive two questions. The first question is how do I find the name, and that one I can answer. The second question is where did the statute go, and based on what I read in the paper, I am telling the people there are two plans, and almost without exception, and I have talked to hundreds of people -- in 120 hours you see a lot of people -- and, almost without exception, everyone of these people, when I describe the possibility of your plan where you have the entryway and the statute up towards the Lincoln Memorial, almost without exception the response is "thank God. That is where we want it, that is where it has to go, I don't have to write my congressman if it goes there", and so forth.

That is all I have to say.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.