

have seen that man before, and I have seen him in Vietnam, and I think so many Vietnam Veterans who will come to Washington will come away with that same feeling. That feeling, yes, that is one of us, one of the young men who served his country at a time of hope.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Next is Rick Abell, Peace Corps.

MR. ABELL: I will make this brief.

As one who was the volunteer for the Peace Corps, and in fact is currently employed by the Peace Corps, as one who was a volunteer for the Army Infantry in the Republic of South Vietnam, and as one who has received an 80 percent disability from the Veterans Commission, one who humbly feels that he loves his country and its principles, it would be a travesty on the souls of the dead, who gave their lives in the defense of a world's Nation, not to approve this sculpture and flag pole. Let us not misconstrue our mission.

We come to honor those who fought for freedom in a noble cause.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Milt Copulos, the Heritage Foundation.

MR. COPULOS: Thank you, good afternoon.

My name is Milt Copulos, and many of you may know I was a member of the Sculpture Panel, but I am testifying on my own behalf, because I felt it might be of some value to have the view of a combat soldier.

In many ways I am typical of 2.7 million men and women who served in Vietnam. I enlisted in 1966, I was 19 years old at the time, felt I had a duty as a citizen to serve my country. By the time I was 22, I had completed two voluntary tours of duty in Vietnam, seen 45 of my comrades killed on a mountain top that none of you ever heard of, had Last Rights four times, was retired out of the Army on disability, still, like the overwhelming majority of those who served in Vietnam, I am glad that I served, I am proud of my service, and I would be willing to serve again if asked.

I am sure that my feelings are a little difficult for you to understand. You had to be there, they say. Yet somehow Rick Hart has managed to transcend the barriers to overcome the limitations of language with the sculpture. Somehow he has truly managed to capture the essence of the Vietnam experience.

It has been said that one of the attributes of great artists is the universal ability to communicate. Whether it is a play by Shakespeare, or a painting by DaVinci, a great

work of art must have universal appeal. Rick Hart's statue does this. It reaches out and touches the soul.

During the process of developing the design, we would periodically, we Vietnam Veterans, look for the progress. I was struck by the fact that each one reacted in an identical fashion.

First, they would stop and stare, overwhelmed by the figures. You could almost see the memories. They would then approach it almost reverently, always commenting on how a canteen hung. Then, without exception, they would begin to describe the action taking place. Each was able to project themselves into those figures, and to draw upon his own experience, because each of them saw themselves there. No two stories was alike. That is perhaps the greatest test of testimony to the sculptor's merit, the statue's ability to communicate was not limited to those who served, although time and time again it was.

One could see the beginnings of a glimmer of understanding in their eyes, how they perceived the incongruous innocence, the courage, the essential vulnerability of these boys in war years.

How, at long last, they began to comprehend the enormity of the task that they were asked to perform. I would

also like to address one other question, that of flag placement.

Earlier you heard Kent Cooper suggest a variety of places. I know that has been viewed many times in your meetings. I would like to emphatically disagree, it has always been the position of those who participated in the compromise that the American flag should be placed properly. The flag, we must remember as a tangible system of the principles for which we fought.

The Americans who went to Vietnam went there for principles. The principles that the strong should help the weak, the principle that to the extent any man's freedom is diminished, every man's is.

Therefore, to fail to give the flag a prominent place could be the great faith of nearly 58,000 names inscribed on Maya Ying Lin's wall. We made an effort to place it so that it would be sensitive to the design already in place, that the flag could be placed prominently, without conflicting to the goal, and continues to be my personal belief.

It has been nearly a decade since the Vietnam War ended, a decade during which most of that concept languished in a no-man's land. For that decade they have seen their service, their sacrifices questioned, their notions of duty

questioned. They were portrayed as misfit suckers, and worse. Yet their homecoming was not complete. It will not be until their service is recognized.

Rick Hart's statue recognizes and honors their service. It can help to make that homecoming finally take place.

I urge you to approve it.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

Next is Tom Carhart.

MR. CARHART: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Carhart. I represent only myself. I think it is fair to say that I started this controversy a year ago.

I would first like to agree with Don Bailey, in emphasizing, in spite of CBS' derogatory comment to the contrary, no one has ever uttered racism to the contrary; that is a low and vicious slur. I don't care if the Pope submitted this design, or Atilla the Hun, you criticize the art and not the artist.

A lot of people misunderstood what this memorial is about, and you will have to bear with me. This is something that rips at my guts. It is very emotional.

Let me read briefly of something written by Paul Goldenberg of the New York Times, Thursday, October 7. "By