

hope that you will do it very quickly.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

We go now to Richard J. Gallant, Service Director,
Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Please begin.

MR. GALLANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of
the Commission, distinguished guests. I am Richard Gallant
for the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

By way of information, we are the only veterans
organization virtually chartered composed of combat wounded
veterans who are recipients of the Purple Heart medal. As
such, it would probably go without saying that we carry our
own memorial of Vietnam with us every day of the week. As
such, we have watched over the years the sundry comments or
controversies that have gone on over the Vietnam conflict
and also those which have addressed itself to a memorial to
recognize the valued benefits. And I would like to say now
on the Vietnam veterans that when you look at all of our
veterans from all of the wars, we have perhaps the finest
soldiers that ever served this Nation during the war in
Vietnam and, as such, we should do all that we can to show
them our respect, to give them a memorial that truly reflects

the total Vietnam veteran. And I think you will see that the Vietnam veteran is almost like a microcosm. There are many of them, many shapes, forms, ideas, ideologies and so forth, but they all have one common goal, one common vision, and that was to follow that flag when this country called them. They went there and they did their job, and when it was over, they returned here under the cover of that flag for the freedom and liberties and, as such, we feel strong consideration that we support the American flag as part of this memorial. It is truly an integral part of the Vietnam veterans.

And as we walk through and look at the recommendations and the submissions that have come forward, and we looked and we dreamed and we saw the names we had carved in marble, we recognized that here for posterity are the names of our heroes of this Nation that went forth under the direction of this Nation and who followed their flag and made the supreme sacrifice. And as such, we felt that that was a very acceptable rewarding way to remember our fallen comrades. But then I thought, and we discussed it with others, what about that veteran that returned home? What about that veteran who is making his way through life now? What about the children, the grandchildren? What about posterity for this Nation to recognize what occurred during that particular

traumatic history that we had during the Vietnam conflict?

Then I saw this statue here. And, gentlemen, it really depicts what the Vietnam veteran looked like. I could see myself, only I wasn't quite that young and didn't have that black hair. But I think that what we have before us today is something that the Vietnam veteran fought for. The right for individuals to have their own ideas but also the ability to recognize others and their ideas and to come to a compromise, and a compromise that would not destroy any of their own principles.

I feel, and the Military Order of Purple Heart feels that by having the American flag, the marble walls etched with the names of our fallen comrades, and this beautiful statue here depicting the veteran as he looked in combat, as something to remind us that the Nation must survive only when it recognizes the value of its youth.

We also wish to go on record that we support our fellow veterans organizations and their statements supporting this recommendation.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to speak to you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

We now go to Donald J. Swartz, Director of