

you very much for the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Next among those asking to speak is Tom Carhart.

MR. CARHART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will be very brief.

This has been a long and very emotional controversy. Very briefly I would like to, if I may, pull back this chart which shows the entryway concept. I was struck by something as I stood here. I am not an architect nor an artist, but I know the land in front of me. This is the circular path that goes around the entire lip. We were told the natural entryway was somewhere on the border. There are trees here, and the open field is from this direction. The people, in the summertime they will not be on the path, but they will flow across the field. They want to see it. They won't approach it through the woods, because you can't see it from here. But from here you can see it, so if there is a natural entry, obviously it is through the opening.

If you must insist on the flag and statute, for whatever reason, be it art or politics, and art is politics, as Plato said, then this is the obvious place to put them, unless you want to hide them. I realize this is a fait accompli, and so on, but you must consider even on this humble scaled

model, in which the foilage is dramatically diminished from that which occurs in the summer and spring and fall, the flag is entirely hidden.

There is not a pathway from the supposed entryway, nor paths for the handicapped, to go down to the wall, so it becomes a matter of guessing where in that path to make the quote-unquote natural entryway. That is obviously not there. Also, there are flags far surpassing in volume the size of the flag that is placed between there and the wall.

Now, I am here as a Vietnam veteran. I got emotional involved in this a long time ago, and I am still very caught up in it. I, like Duncan Hunter and Don Bailey, both who are members of Congress and Vietnam veterans, I am a combat veteran. I bled for my country, and a lot of my brothers died there. I don't mean they died some distance away, but they died in my arms. Their names are inscribed on this wall, and that is a powerful feeling to me and everyone that served in the wars for their country, whatever war and in whatever period. Those men died as heroes.

Whatever one's esthetic appreciation of the listing of their names on black marble might be, and that was the genesis of the fight, and it is a political fight, but whatever one's artistic taste may be, the placing of a flag at

the apex of the wall was seen as an acceptable mitigation of that. Whatever you thought of the artistics, the flag and the inscription reaffirmed the principles for which they died, because there are principles that justify death, and those men lived up to that belief, and those who don't believe that deserve to live as slaves. This country is established on the principles of absolute freedoms, and for those principles those men died.

Now, if we could hear from those men and women whose names are on that wall, where would they want that flag, they would want that flag right above them, as close as possible -- this is me, this is what I died for, America -- not over in the trees somewhere, out of sight, out of mind, and so I plead with you once again, although I realize it is a vain effort, to place the statute and flag at the compromised location which was agreed to by all veteran organizations, all opposing veterans, indeed by the 66 members of Congress who sent a letter of opposition to the President, who withdrew their letter after the compromise was released, based upon the idea the flag would go at the apex of the wall and the statute within the "V".

No matter what you do -- I realize that is beyond mine or any other power, of course -- time will pass and the ultimate decision will be made on this by the American people.

I think Mr. Copulos, who will follow me, will indicate some sense of how the American people, and particularly veterans, feel about the placement of the flag. You can put the flag and statue wherever you want, and it may stay there or may not. It may be moved by popular acclaim sometime in the future. I realize that would be a highly irregular proceeding but not impossible. It may take five years or it may take ten years, or it may never happen, but I believe the heart-beat of America is no better symbolized than by that flag and everything tied up in it, and for which those men and women died. I believe it would be a dishonorable disservice to them to separate them by even as short a distance as across the field, let alone behind the trees, for a memorial that is dedicated in honor of all who served.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

General George B. Price, U.S. Army, retired.

GENERAL PRICE: Sir, I must confess I feel sort of in the wrong place, since I am neither a politician nor artist, and I do believe it is appropriate that I offer you the apologies of all of us who served our country if by innuendo or any other fashion the dignity or integrity of this group has been tainted. I find that regrettable and, most assuredly, for

those people with whom I work, extend my apologies.

Secondly, I was at that meeting that occurred in Senator Warner's office, and if we are going to talk about the Bailey proposal, then we ought to talk about the Davidson/Price compromise, because General McLain Davidson and myself were the ones that went over to the VVMF and influenced them to compromise their position in favor of adding to this memorial those elements which we thought would make it more complete, and by that meaning that we would add the statute and the flag, and you may be interested to know that the VVMF, on its own accord, had already considered the flag at that point, and thought it appropriate, and that they wanted to treat the entire two acres as a monument, and we seem to lose sight of that, focusing so much on the wall, and I do believe, if my memory serves me correct, that from that meeting it was decided by popular vote, if you will, that we would submit Proposal "B" as the first alternative, while reserving the other two which are presented by the VVMF, in the event the processes decided that was not aesthetically proper and was not decided on -- I think that is correct -- so we were considering a put-down on the premises of the first alternative that came out of that meeting, but not all of the alternatives, and we did consider them all, and I think that is important,

and the decision was we would recommend to you that proposal in all faith and honesty, and if it became a matter of controversy and could not be approved, we would withdraw it and come to you with another proposal, and I think that is the way it happened. At no time was there any indication, by innuendo, and I learned that word since I have been in this -- I really like it -- or otherwise that you have been bought, politicized, begged, put down, or any other way influenced to arrive at a decision before you knew what it was that you were deciding. And so I urge you, one, to recognize that this procedure did occur, and, two, as all heroes, do what you think is in the best interest of this country, based on your legal and lawful responsibilities, and let the rest of it be damned.

I sort of feel that, and you know, Jan, you are a dear friend and I love you very much, but I am sort of feeling like many people felt about Martin Luther King -- I hope you don't have no more dreams soon. We can bring this dream to reality and we can bring this one to fruition, and I hope you keep awake and don't dream, but I can assure you we have nothing but the best of intentions and I can assure you we are trying to do something in the best interest of our country, and whether you take a zillion or a million number

of veterans, the real thing that is important to them is that they have a place to come to, and that is important because it symbolizes a dedication and an era in their lives that is very important, and I think we can present this memorial to them in a fashion we can all be proud of, and I trust your judgment in that respect.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Cooper T. Holt, from VFW.

MR. HOLT: Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission: My name is Cooper T. Holt, and I am the Executive Director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Washington office, and I appear before you representing the views of the Veterans of Foreign Wars regarding the three proposals presented before you for locating the sculpture and flag staff at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

As you know, the VFW represents almost two million veterans who served their country overseas during a period of war. Of that membership, well over half a million are veterans who served in Vietnam.

I certainly thank you for the opportunity to bring the views of our membership to assist in the final selection of the location of the remaining parts of the memorial. I