

NANCY DICKERSON FOX TELEVISION NEWS COMMENTARY, February 25, 1988

It was a quarter of a century ago that old Senator Scott took a look around Washington, saw statues and monuments popping up all over and declared the capital was in danger of becoming an unplanned cemetery. I thought of him as Congress considered the proposal to stick a statue of a white woman nurse at the Viet Nam Memorial. It would be an artistic abomination, a cluttering jarring token to women who are already honored there. And it's ironic that the architect who designed the wall, who happens to be a woman, told Congress not to add a statue of a female.

Now, no one questions the contribution women made in Viet Nam. I was there twice; I saw it. But the existing memorial is already dedicated to them as well as to men. And the nearby statue of three soldiers was carefully designed to symbolize all who served. It does not include air force, navy or marines or American Indians or black nurses. So what's to keep these heroic groups from also demanding bronze statues of themselves at the wall? And as Carter Brown, Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission says, if you place a nurse statue on a remote spot leading away from the memorial, as has been suggested, it would end up slighting the very constituency it was trying to please.

Everyone who's been to the Viet Nam wall knows its mystic aura; it's an emotional experience like being alone in a small church. And I pray Congress won't ruin it.

As a card carrying feminist, I oppose adding a female statue. It's not needed and would look awful no matter how you see it.

I'm Nancy Dickerson and that's my commentary.