

This statue, I am convinced, will serve exactly the same purpose, but for a different group of people, and I, too, urge that it be approved.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

MR. ATHERTON: Mr. Chairman, we have received a number of letters from members of Congress in support of this project, and I would simply like to read their names so they can be entered into the record.

Senator Nancy Kassenbaum

Congressman Steve Gunderson

Senator Robert Dole

Senator Barbara Mikulski

Senator Rudy Boschwitz

Congressman Bruce Veno

Congressman Lane Evans

Senator Alan Cranston

Congressman Vince Weber

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

MR. ATHERTON: I might just mention two telephone calls this morning in support of this project, also as a result of a newspaper article.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: All right.

MR. ATHERTON: Now, Mr. Doubek has indicated he would be our first speaking in opposition.

Mr. Doubek.

MR. DOUBEK: Good morning, Chairman Brown, members of the Commission. My name is Robert W. Doubek, a Vietnam veteran residing in Washington, D. C.

I was a founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. I was its Executive Director; I was its Project Director. As such, I was directly responsible for the entire process of design, Federal approval, and construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Mall here in Washington.

In recognition of my efforts, along with Jan Scruggs and John Wheeler, we were nominated for a congressional gold medal in April of '85. In further recognition, I, along with Mr. Scruggs and Mr. Wheeler, was pictured in the cover story in the National Geographic in May of 1985. I would like to state, however, that I am speaking here as an individual and not as a representative of any organization.

There are reasons why installing a statue of an Army nurse at the site of the Vietnam Memorial is a good idea. There are, however, many more and better reasons to reject this proposal. This Memorial is unique in the City because

it honors all who served in a particular conflict, regardless of rank, branch of service, combat experience, or any other category. Today, however, a group of veterans claim that they are not recognized by the Memorial because they are not literally depicted in the statue, yet the fact is that many groups of veterans, many categories and groups of veterans can and will no doubt make similar claims. These include Air Force and Navy pilots, Navy and Army medics, Navy and Marine Corps special forces, Army and Marine Corps truck drivers, artillerymen and tank corps. The same might be said of native Americans, aliens, Orientals, Slavs and Arabs. Does the statue say the veterans in these categories served less honorably because they are not literally depicted?

The answer is, of course not. But if representative elements are ever going to be incorporated in public works of art or public monuments, one of a small group of people has to be chosen to symbolize everyone. For the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, there was only one choice -- the grunts -- the infantryman. The "grunts" account for the majority of the names on the wall, and all other categories and military occupations supported this effort.

The Memorial's extraordinary power derives from symbolish achieved by carefully arranged sequence, the flag, the statue, and the wall, and attempts to literally depict everyone can only diffuse its symbolic power and weaken the Memorial.

It was six years ago this same month at this Commission that the Memorial was denounced as a "black gash of shame and sorrow". In the meantime, however, in the ensuing five years it has become the most visited and revered monument in the City, and the basic rule of common sense is "if something ain't broke, you don't fix it."

The main argument for adding a sculpture of an Army nurse appears to be the majority who served in that occupation were women. Granted that gender is probably the most basic human distinction and that our society is very sensitive, and rightly so, to gender bias, but can anyone really argue in good faith that the Memorial misrepresents truth or history because there is no sculpture of a woman? Can that woman identify with the flag, can that woman identify with the uniform? Cannot women see themselves reflected in that wall of names, and, indeed, the inscription at the top of the wall that says, on the top line, "In Honor of the Men and

Women of the Armed Forces".

I also urge you to consider the precedent that would be set were you to approve this proposal. The National Park Service has already received inquiries regarding literal depictions of native Americans, and if you open this Pandora's box, you can certainly expect many similarly well-meaning but shortsighted suggestions to complete the Memorial or make it better. Your approval would also mean that virtually any future work, and perhaps recently dedicated work of public representational art, would be required to include a depiction of both sexes.

Finally I urge you to consider the legality of this proposal. A fund raising brochure published by the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project states clearly that the statue represents and honors all women who served during the Vietnam War, from every branch of service, as well as from other private and government agencies. Public Law 96-297, which authorized the construction of the Memorial, limited the authority to a memorial to men and women of the armed forces of the United States. This proposal seems to be incompatible with the legislation.

In building the Memorial, we had to face many tough

choices. We took the risk of an open competition. We had the uncertainty of placing the selection process in the hands of an outside jury. We had to reject tempting promises of large donations if we would only remove certain politically sensitive individuals from our national sponsoring committee. We had to tell grieving parents whose sons died during the war, but not in the war zones, that their sons' names were not eligible for inscription. These were very difficult choices, but they were necessary in order to remain true to the higher ideal of a national memorial.

This Commission is similarly faced with a similar choice, which is even made more difficult because the proponents are obviously very good and decent people, and they have attracted some political and popular support, but The Fine Arts Commission, however, is the one body that can uphold the ideals of the Memorial, and I urge you to make the tough choice and reject this proposal.

In conclusion I would like to note that a rejection here will not necessarily defeat the legitimate desire for recognition of the service of women veterans to our country. Public Law 99-610 was enacted in November of 1986 and it authorizes the establishment of a memorial on Federal land

to honor women who have served in the armed forces of the United States. It appears such memorial may even better advance the purposes for which the proponents have argued here today.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear. If you would like, I would be happy to introduce other people speaking in opposition.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Yes, please do.

MR. DOUBEK: I would like to introduce Kent Cooper, with the architectural firm of Cooper-Lecky Partnership, which was retained by the Vietnam Memorial Fund to be the project architect and realize the Maya Lin design.

MR. GOODMAN: Mr. Chairman, may I raise one question with respect to this testimony briefly?

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Yes.

MR. GOODMAN: Would you be good enough to clarify for me your assertion in your testimony that there would be a possible violation of the law? If you would, just repeat that as I would like to be clear on it.

MR. DOUBEK: The brochure published by the organization states that the statue represents and honors all women who served during the Vietnam War, from every branch of

the military service, as well as from other private and governmental agencies. By the legislation which authorizes the establishment of the Memorial and under which this proposal is here today, the authorization was limited specifically to a Memorial in honor of the men and women of the armed forces, period.

MR. GOODMAN: So you are suggesting because of the somewhat broader definition in the pamphlet that this would cause a breach of the law?

MR. DOUBEK: Yes.

MR. COOPER: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission.

During the busy months of 1982, many of us often wondered whether or not there would even be a Vietnam Memorial. The fate of Maya Lin's concept, and all of our design work, hung in the balance -- as a political battle, which was rooted in both the unresolved issues of the Vietnam War itself, and the problems of public understanding of conceptual art, raged around us.

I have always personally felt that the Memorial Wall was complete in itself, and did not need further clarification or embellishment. But when the decision to add a flag and



sculpture was made as the political compromise which allowed the Memorial to be built, I worked hard to create a new site design within which the basic wall concept might exist in harmony with these additive elements.

Rich Hart's sensitive sculptural grouping of three servicemen on patrol gave us the clue to creating an episodic setting -- an entry sequence -- in which a visitor might find a heightened identification with each of the design elements in turn. In order to accomplish this, the entire path structure of the west end of the Constitution Gardens site had to be altered. The quality of the resulting design speaks for itself.

Today you are being asked to approve the concept for yet another thematic element to be located within the Memorial grounds. Despite the efforts of a talented design team, no solid case has been made for this further addition. The siting is close to casual in its character.

Drawing 2 of the site analysis illustrates this point by showing that the entire string of siting possibilities-- numbers 2 through 6--has the same set of advantages and disadvantages. Site 5 is probably the most superficially pleasing, but all are irrelevant to the Memorial's landmark episodic

design. To accept this one concept is to open the floodgates to adding further memorials on sites 3, 4, and 6. I fervently hope that you will head off such a chain of events now.

The basic issue seems to me to be one of proliferation. Added statuary on the site will destroy the tension which presently exists between the figurative and abstract design elements that are there, and this tension is one of the unique attributes of this particular design.

I believe it would be most appropriate for the Commission to request that the National Park Service oversee the development of a master plan for directing the design of any and all additional commemorations, when authorized by the Congress, within the established Vietnam Memorial site. Dignified commemorations might be handled in a number of different ways, none of which would contribute to the proliferation of statuary which can be seen in the proposal before you today. Therefore, many of us who have been involved in the design of the Memorial hope that you of the Commission will reject this particular design proposal.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

While you are here, I would be curious to explore

that element or that concept which you mentioned, which, I must say, hadn't occurred to me. What would you have in mind for this commemoration?

MR. COOPER: For other commemorative elements?

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Yes.

MR. COOPER: I think that throughout the site, and in the basic area of the entrance sequence, there were several elements that were eliminated along the way, and I don't know exactly why, which I think might be useful commemorative elements for dedication. Benches would be a very good example, places to rest in order to see or to view -- We have several placed along in this particular area.

I think the basic thing I would hope would happen would be that we would not get a proliferation of statuary. I think that plaques and other artifacts that are dedicated to and are dedicated in as relevant a symbolic way as possible might serve the same function without changing this basic episodic sequence of entry that is so unique.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

MR. DOUBEK: The next speaker will be Joe Brown, a principal in landscape architecture from Edaw, Inc. Mr. Brown was a competitor in competition and was retained by the

Fund to assist Mr. Cooper and work with Mr. Hart in siting Mr. Hart's sculpture.

MR. BROWN: My role in this project predates a lot of people. Bob and Jan and I sat in the Metropolitan Club, and I don't even know what year --

MR. DOUBEK: October of 1979.

MR. J. BROWN: (Continuing) -- and we looked at what possibilities there would be for a site under this original concept. I think it is a very difficult situation here this morning. It is very complex. And I sympathize with your position, even though we have gone through this long story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and wrote many, many chapters. I think I agree with most of what has been said here this morning. Ms. Boulay came to see me a year or so ago and was very evocative and very persuasive. Like all of the women in this area, she is exactly as moving and persuasive, and they are all climbing up a cliff with society's symbols with them, and they are doing a very good job of it. But the issue is one of is the Memorial complete.

I think it is a fundamental question you have to ask yourself over and over again. I think a Memorial that has been visited by all the people that have visited it is

not incomplete, and to persuade you to vote in favor of this project through an argument of incompleteness is an incomplete argument.

We were presented with the same decision you are, and because, when Ms. Boulay asked us to do this work for her, of having done the site of Mr. Hart's sculpture, as well as the work with Bob in the original program concept, below scale memorializing concept, as well as working with legislative approval process, but when she came to us and asked us if we could do this and we talked and looked at the parameters with which she was asking us to site this sculpture that had not been designed at that time, prior to a site being selected, and sculpture should always be designed for a site not separate from a site, but I was very persuaded and I went to almost everyone in our firm across the country, the national firm's headquarters in California, and in Alexandria, and we made a firm decision that the work was complete and the book was closed, and to reopen the book and tell a longer story would ruin the book, and at that particular time I recommended she go see a very fine landscape architect, Elliot Rhodeside, and if there was a possibility that it could be done well, Elliot would certainly do it well. We made the decision and

it was a difficult one.

I can ask you to consider a few other critical questions in your decision today. One is that there is a super subtlety, I think, in the siting, and to some extent I would even suggest it is too subtle. There is almost, I think, an apologizing to be made about placing this statue here. This statue and the motives behind it are critically important as a project, but that does not justify placing it in a site unworthy and as an attachment to a long process of completions that preceded us today.

As Kent was mentioning, when we sited the additional work here, we did a number of other things to make that a proper entry and to make it a contexturally connected site. We moved this whole walkway, we created a new entry plaza here and a new walkway connection to the Lincoln Memorial and a new connection here. We redid the lighting as well, and we worked on some sidewalks, and granite/cobbler improvements here and some lighting, so there was a development of an original concept to a whole contextual design that would make the whole work and be complete. To take and put -- although the details of this have great similarity, they are only in details -- materials, and it is a circle attached to a walkway