

major changes to the Memorial, which is why this approval was necessary. We were indeed pleased to receive this approval for our plans.

Our country owes all Vietnam veterans proper honor and recognition. We need to bring the healing process begun in 1982 to a close. Your help to complete the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with our statue will do just that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

MS. BOULAY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to talk to you this morning about symbolism, the symbolism that made us decide to choose this particular statue. Before I do that, there are some women veterans who are here this morning. We have more than a thousand working with us for this project. We didn't bring all of them with us here this morning, but there are some women, and I am very proud to be able to work with them, and I would like them to stand because I would like you to see them.

Thank you.

I want to share with you some typical experiences of women in Vietnam. I must use my own personal experience in order to do that. But I have been reading some of the oral histories that are being published about women veterans and

I have found themes that were very important to me, things that were important to me. The things that happen are all in this book, and they are all familiar, but I will use my story because I am most familiar with my details.

It was in the early '60s and I was listening to President Kennedy deliver his inaugural address, and the people of the '60s listened very carefully to that speech, and I listened very carefully when he asked or when he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". I had just started my education, and I wasn't sure how I was going to respond to that request, to that question.

By 1965, Christmas of '65, I had come to the conclusion as to how I was going to serve my country. It came at a time when I had gone home for Christmas in '65. Home for me was in northern Massachusetts, and Stanley Panneton had also gone home for Christmas, and Stanley and I had -- he was three years younger than myself, and I remember teaching Stan how to fish -- but Stan had just come home from Vietnam and Stan needed two canes to walk around. He had metal pieces in his head that had been put there to keep his head together. He sometimes didn't know who his mother was. And

suddenly I knew exactly what I was going to do. I went back to Boston to the Army Recruiting Station -- well, actually to the Navy Recruiting Station, because my daddy had been in the Navy -- and I said, "I am a nurse; I would like to go to Vietnam", and he said, "Sorry, lady, we don't have guaranteed assignments, try the Army". So I went, literally, next door to the Army and I said, "I am a nurse with the trauma specialty and if I join the Army, will you send me to Vietnam", and he said, "Raise your right hand and sign on the dotted line", and that is essentially what I did. The Army immediately kept its promise and I arrived in Vietnam March of '67. I was assigned to an intensive care unit, at the 36 Evac Hospital in Binh Thuan. It was just at the mouth of the Saigon River and the South China Sea, and one of my duties there, also, was to take calls for the emergency room. As casualties came in, a lot of hands were needed, and I had been in the country a month when my turn came to go to Gia Dinh. By the time the medic and I got there--we were assigned together--the casualties had already arrived. I ran to find the first one and my hands were shaking and the medic was scared and I looked at him and the first one I could see that all of his head was gone, from here all of the way down, and that he was

dead. The medic, this was his first time, too, and he was seeing a very dead person and he started shaking and screaming and one of the old supervisors came in and she got ahold of the medic and she shook him and she started talking to him very carefully, and all of a sudden I could see the panic disappear, and we went on to the next person, who was also dead. There were twelve Australians brought in that afternoon, ten were dead, only two were alive. That was my introduction to service in Vietnam.

I spent the first three months at the intensive care unit, and my chief nurse came and said, "We are transferring you down to Ward 3 to be head nurse".

I said, "Head nurse -- I don't know how to be a head nurse; I have never been a head nurse", but she said, "You are in the Army and we are sending you down there", and I said, "Okay". I lost that argument, and I went to be head nurse on Ward 3. It was a special ward, a couple quonset huts end to end, and 60 beds that were usually filled with 19-year-old Americans who had minor injuries, and what made it difficult for us was we knew that we were caring for these people to heal them and send them back to the killing, perhaps to be killed. I remember quite a few people from those

days and I got to know quite a few young men. Randy Brown was a young man who was only 19. The first time he came in he had a minor wound in his arm. He healed up. He had a very bright and sunny personality, and he used to help care for patients. He came back two more times while I was there. Each time he was more helpful, more cheerful. It was almost like watching him mature right before my eyes. It was an interesting experience. After three months there, I was transferred up to the 93rd Evacuation Hospital in Phnom Penh, back to my intensive care unit, where all casualties were very seriously wounded, very ill. Life is very busy there, and the beginning of my last month in Vietnam was January 31, and it began literally with a bang at 3:00 a.m., when the Tet offense started. We now know today it was the Tet offense. At the time we didn't have those nice categories and we didn't know what was happening; we just knew we were under fire. When we first started hearing the noises, the chief nurse came running through the corridor saying "keep your lights out, get out into the bunker". So I found my glasses and got under the bed and found my helmet and ran out and sat in the bunker for the next few hours, sitting on my helmet.

That night is memorable for several reasons, one of

which is it was the first time and only time in Vietnam I have ever been cold. I guess I was scared.

I went on to work -- I went to duty at around 7:00 o'clock, and we were very interested in finding out which patient we could evacuate out. We really still didn't know what was going on. It was about 8:00 o'clock and my supervisor, who was about this high, a little thinner than I am, came in and all of a sudden there w-s this huge explosion and the wall of the quonset hut caved in. I didn't know what was happening. She said, "Quick, put him under the bed", and this guy that we were standing next to was about 200 pounds and he had a body cast on from his armpits to his toes, which added another fifty pounds. I grabbed him under his shoulders, she grabbed his ankles, and we lifted him up off the bed, down on the floor and under the bed. I don't know where we got the strength.

The next few days are pretty much a blur of endless casualties, one after the other. I do remember one young man in particular. His name was Mike, and he was from Brooklyn. He had been at the embassy in Saigon when it was overrun that first night and he had laid there in the yard, with bullet wounds in his legs, so by the time he got to us that early

in the morning the infection had already set in and the surgeon's solution to the problems was to take his leg off inch by inch. That meant he had to stay with us for several days, longer than usual. Most patients left within 72 hours. So we got to know Mike and it was a very difficult time for Mike. Mike said, "Gee, what I really would like is to talk to the hospital chaplain", so I went and found the priest and he was just too busy with the guys who really weren't going to make it, so I came back and told Mike, and he said, "What I really need is I really need some rosaries", so I went back to my room and I got my rosaries that had been with me all along and we sat and said the rosaries several times while he was still with us.

I left to get some sleep one day and when I came back he had gone, with my rosaries, and somewhere in this world is this huge ex-marine whose silver rosaries say "Donna Marie-Holy Cross.

The Tet offensive was beginning to wind down. The casualties were fewer. I was due to go home pretty soon. I came to work at 7:00 o'clock -- I had been working from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. -- and when I came on duty the day nurse said, "Gee, we have one patient we really don't think will

make it through the night, and would you 'special'", which is our term for one person, one nurse, and I said, "Of course". She said that he is missing most of his liver and what is left has shrapnel in it; his one kidney left is shutting down, and right now he is not conscious.

I walked down to the bedside and looked at the chart, and it was my friend Randy Brown from 36th. I walked over to him and I said, "Randy, wake up; it is Ms. Boulay", and, of course, he wasn't conscious, but I kept talking to him; I kept saying, "Come on, Randy, please wake up", and he did. He woke up around midnight and he said, "Hi, Ms. Boulay"; I said, "Hi, Randy". We talked about going home, we talked about friends we had back in the 36th. His sparkle was all gone. He closed his eyes around 3:00 o'clock that night and I knew that the end was close. I held on to him, and shortly Randy died, and then it was my turn to cry.

I went home in a couple of days, alive, but my spirit was wounded.

Other women have different details to their stories, but we share many of the same characteristics.

This is one of my favorite pictures -- I don't know her name; I only know she was a WAC in Phnom Penh, and I



thought you might like to see that particular photo.

Another one of my favorites is a sergeant, a Marine sergeant who worked at the Embassy in Saigon. We were there to help our allies, and I think these women showed particular interesting characteristics that are important to me, important to my self-image, the self-image of women who served.

In this book the concept of nurturing appears quite often, and that is one reason why the nurse in the statue cradles her helmet. It is a position of nurturing. It is a very feminine position. The helmet also, of course, tells you about the risks that we did have to take. This is a woman who is in the Special Services, who talks about when she was there she was there to help as much as she could the spirit of the men she was working with. The concept of healing is demonstrated by the instruments of healing in the right breast pocket.

There is a WAC, Pinky Houser, whose story is in here. Pinky talks about getting off duty on Long Xuyen, where she was a personnel officer, and going to listen to the stories of the patients in the 24th Evac Hospital. Listening is a cultivated characteristic. That is why she wears the stethoscope, the universal symbolism of listening, around her neck.

She wears one of the uniforms of her country. It is a specific one. It is the jungle fatigues, and the jungle boots. We were right in the middle of the jungle warfare.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with this: The American women who served in Vietnam brought this culture with them. Their contributions reflect their personalities, singularly and collectively, as much as their individual responsibilities. Regardless of occupation, we served with strength and dignity, with the uniqueness which makes us American women who demonstrated this in an alien land half a world away from home. That was 20 years ago, and now most of us are not so young, are approaching our middle years, and as we look to our past, our youth, when we visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, we see some of the names of our comrades whose lives we touched, we see the service of our brothers eloquently depicted in the statue of Mr. Hart, three infantrymen, and what we see, as do our families and our friends, is a missing element. We yearn to see a statue with which we can identify, which will speak to our history, our contributions, which will eloquently depict who we were, what we did, which will symbolize our spirit, our roles as listener, nurturer, healer, patron, which will tell future generations that women served.

Mr. Hart has said that he wanted - quote - to touch the veterans in a way that would make them say yeah, this is true, this is the way it was, this was us. You have succeeded admirably, Mr. Hart. The women who served deserve the opportunity to see a statue which says this is us, this is the way it was for the women.

I was among the three veterans who chose this design to be the Project symbol, because she is replete with symbols that convey women's contributions. With your help the symbolism depicting American women in Vietnam will be incorporated into the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Thank you.

I have one more picture, which you must return to me, if you want to really know what we looked like in person 20 years ago.

I would like now to introduce the next person who would like to speak for the Project, and that is my good friend, Chuck Heger.

MR. HEGER: Thank you, Donna.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Commissioners, good morning. I have a prepared comment, but I think for the record I will submit it, and in trying to indulge your time

and be as meaningful as I can, let me just take two minutes to explain a little bit why I am involved.

I served with the 9th Infantry Division in 1968, with my brother, was wounded twice; he was wounded three times, enlisted men, both of us, and we know something about Vietnam. We understand a little something about the contributions that were made.

Today I serve as president of the World USO, and, incidentally, I am here not on behalf of the USO, but on behalf of my own perspective on this project. I am also the treasurer of this organization and on the Board of Directors.

Because those many years were confusing to this society and confounding, and that drug all society into that war, and there was great indecision and great meandering as to how we should fight it and who should fight it, it was important at that time to try and understand what we were doing and why. Great debate still wages, and properly so, as to why we were there and what our intention was, but the point now, as reflected in 1982 when we broke ground for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which, incidentally, I was one of the five speakers that broke the ground in dedication of that memorial on Veterans Day in 1982, was to try and put back

into society what we had taken out, and to not acknowledge the women who were involved in that long struggle I think is not the right thing to do, because the women from our country who spent the years they did over there, in a situation where it was guerilla warfare and war struck at any time, any place -- it wasn't what we had seen in previous wars -- and certainly women have made very significant contributions in our society, in all mankind, in all wars, but because of the kind of confusion and confusing meandering process that we went through at that time, women were in a more uncertain situation, and I think it is appropriate, because of the character of that struggle, that we do acknowledge what was done and contributed by women, and that is why I am involved and that is why whatever I can do to help, I will do.

Thank you very much.

MS. BOULAY: Mr. Chairman, I would now like to introduce one other woman veteran who is going to speak, Mrs. Diane Evans.

MS. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners:

I, too, have prepared remarks this morning, and I would like to share a little bit of my experience with you. I, like Donna, served my country in the Army in Vietnam for

six years. I am a Vietnam veteran. I will not go into my experiences in Vietnam because they are very similar to Donna's. But one of the things I would like to share with you is I am very proud of the women I served with, the women I saw in Vietnam that worked 12 hours, 14 to 16 hours a day. They were very courageous. They always put someone else's life before their own. We, too, put patients under the beds; we, too, were rocketed.

I have one patient that comes to mind, and I want to share him with you because I was with him when he died. I found out where he lived and I wrote his mother a letter and I told his mother that I was with him when he died. I received a letter back from her. I was in Vietnam and it was Christmas. The letter from her said, "I didn't know there were women in Vietnam; I didn't know that there would be a woman with my son when he died. I can now be at peace, knowing that you were with him. Thank you." I have treasured that letter for years.

Now a little bit about the homecoming. After Vietnam we, as women, went back into society and didn't admit that we were veterans. A lot of us didn't. Our country didn't know basically that we were there. We weren't to be

seen in the media, in the art world. We weren't depicted in commemorative sculpture, or even on television, because in Vietnam women worked behind the scenes and off the camera. It was in the '80s when I began my search to see if women in this country were being recognized, and not finding it, I did talk with the artist and we worked together for several months on this statue. Within her are the spirits, the memories, the heart, the names of all the women who served in Vietnam. We have women physicians, women that served in the military intelligence and in various humanitarian roles, nuns or traffic controllers -- a wide variety of occupations -- yet American women veterans are rarely depicted in national commemorative public sculpture. In fact, with the exception of nuns in the battlefield, the memorials in Washington, D. C. that recognize American patriots depict only men. More than 38 figures depict the American soldiers. There are no memorials honoring the contributions of American military women. According to the National Park Service registry of the 110 memorials in Washington, D. C. only three specifically honor American women. The memorial of Mary McLeod Bethune is the one initiated by the United States Government. The other two were initiated by private groups, the nuns of the battle-

field by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians of America, and the memorial for Sara Rittenhouse, a gift of the Georgetown Garden Club.

There is one statue of a military woman. However, she is the Franch national heroine, Joan of Arc, and this statue was a gift from the Society of French Women in Exile in New York.

In Arlington Cemetery there is a statue of women dedicated in 1983 to the Army and Navy nurses who died, and rededicated in 1971 to include Air Force nurses. This monument represents only one profession. Women served in an extraordinary variety of professions during war and peace; in other words, before we could officially become a part of the United States military forces, yet history must record the active participation of meritorious service of women who have been both warriors and supporters of warriors.

Not in any conflict since the American Revolution have women left the struggle for freedom to men alone. Because artists' responses to national experience of war have been largely of men, we continue to stereotype the American soldier as a male. When men, women, and children see the statues of Civil War General George Meade, Revolutionary War