

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT W. DOUBEK, PROJECT DIRECTOR  
 VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND  
 BEFORE THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
 MARCH 4, 1982

1  
S  
AL

MADAME CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION:

GOOD MORNING. I AM ROBERT DOUBEK, THE PROJECT DIRECTOR OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND (VVMF). AS YOU MAY RECALL, I ORIGINALLY APPEARED BEFORE YOU LAST AUGUST, WHEN YOU APPROVED THE CONCEPT AND THE SITE LOCATION OF THE MEMORIAL, AND AGAIN APPEARED LAST DECEMBER WHEN YOU APPROVED ITS PRELIMINARY PLANS. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE AGAIN. I THANK YOU FOR PLACING THIS MATTER ON YOUR AGENDA TODAY AND WE LIKEWISE WISH TO EXTEND OUR APPRECIATION TO SECRETARY WATT FOR REQUESTING YOUR EARLY ACTION.

547  
-11

USMC Ret.  
31  
17  
473

ORING

EAC  
Junker

of the US

17  
Marla  
76

Sen. USA Ret.  
Chief

ard

burgh CSC  
at the

s of Staff

er

Govern

Attans  
an

ance

moreland, Ret.  
U.S. Army

ation only

CORPORATE ADVISORY BOARD

- Chairman  
 Paul Brown  
 Chairman of the Board  
 and Chief Executive Officer  
 General Electric
- Vice Chairmen  
 William A. Bennett  
 Chairman and President  
 American Bank Note Company  
 William M. Hoffman  
 Chairman and President  
 International Telephone  
 and Telegraph  
 John C. McDowell  
 President  
 International Business  
 Machines Corporation  
 Richard Mott  
 President  
 General Electric  
 International Business  
 Machines Corporation  
 J. A. Wilson  
 Chairman and Chief Executive  
 Boeing Company

I APPEAR TODAY ON BEHALF OF VVMF IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPTS OF A FLAG AND A STATUE OF A SERVICEMAN TO BE ADDED AS REFINEMENTS TO THE MEMORIAL'S DESIGN. AS NOTED IN OUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 11, 1982, TO SECRETARY WATT, VVMF WILL DEVELOP THE SPECIFICS OF THESE REFINEMENTS AND SEPARATELY SUBMIT THEM FOR APPROVAL. HOWEVER, I URGE YOU TO APPROVE TODAY, AS REQUESTED BY SECRETARY WATT, THE CONCEPT OF THESE REFINEMENTS SO THAT CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEMORIAL MAY BEGIN THIS MONTH.

PAGE 2

AS YOU MAY KNOW, VVMF IS A NONPROFIT, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION FOUNDED, DIRECTED, AND MANAGED BY VIETNAM VETERANS. WE OBTAINED THE DESIGN CONCEPT FOR THE MEMORIAL THROUGH THE METHOD OF A DESIGN COMPETITION, WHICH BECAME THE LARGEST EVER HELD IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE CONCEPT, AND WE WERE GRATIFIED THAT IT RECEIVED YOUR SWIFT APPROVAL AS WELL AS THAT OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS AND THE NATIONAL CAPITAL MEMORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE. WE WERE ALSO GRATIFIED THAT NUMEROUS CORPORATIONS, THE MAJOR VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS, AND HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS CONTRIBUTED THE FUNDS TO REALIZE THE CONCEPT.

NONETHELESS, THE DESIGN SPARKED CONTROVERSY, PARTICULARLY AMONG OUR BROTHER VIETNAM VETERANS. THE BASIC CRITICISM CENTERED NOT SO MUCH ON WHAT THE DESIGN WAS BUT ON THE FACT THAT IT LACKED ELEMENTS SPECIFICALLY SYMBOLIC OF THE HONORABLE SERVICE OF THE VETERANS AND OF THEIR DEVOTION TO COUNTRY. IT BECAME APPARENT TO VVMF THAT THESE CONCERNS WERE VALID AND NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED.

AGE 3

THUSLY, WE REQUESTED SENATOR JOHN WARNER OF VIRGINIA, ONE OF THE EARLIEST AND MOST DEDICATED CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORTERS OF THE PROJECT, TO ARRANGE AND MODERATE A MEETING AMONG VVMF AND THE LEADING CRITICS OF THE DESIGN, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, TO ATTEMPT TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR CONCERNS. AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSION, AND WITH THE COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP OF SENATOR WARNER, A CONSENSUS OF AGREEMENT WAS ACHIEVED BY WHICH WE HOPE TO MOVE AHEAD ON SCHEDULE TOWARD COMPLETION OF A SUPERB TRIBUTE TO VIETNAM VETERANS. UNDER THE CONSENSUS, VVMF AGREED TO MODIFY THE WORDING OF THE INSCRIPTION SO AS TO MORE STRONGLY EXPRESS HONOR FOR VIETNAM VETERANS, AND TO ADD A FLAG STAFF AND A STATUE OF A SERVICEMAN AT THE SITE. IN TURN, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BASIC DESIGN THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROVED WOULD GOVE FORWARD ON SCHEDULE.

LAST MONTH WE MET WITH SECRETARY WATT TO EXPLAIN THE AGREEMENT. HE EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE THAT AN ACCOMMODATION HAD BEEN REACHED AND INDICATED HIS OWN WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT THE BASIC DESIGN AND THE CONCEPTS OF THE ADDITIONAL REFINEMENTS. HOWEVER, AS THESE REFINEMENTS ARE BY LAW SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THIS COMMISSION, SECRETARY WATT, BEFORE ISSUING A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT, NOW SEEKS YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THEM IN CONCEPT. THUSLY, WE URGE YOUR FAVORABLE ACTION SO THAT GROUND FOR THE

E 4

MEMORIAL CAN BE BROKEN THIS MONTH AS SCHEDULED.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT A FLAG AND STATUE CAN  
INTEGRATED WITH THE BASIC DESIGN SO AS TO HARMONIZE  
WITH AND ENHANCE ITS BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY. WE  
HAVE BEGUN TO EVALUATE ALTERNATE PROPOSALS FOR  
THE FLAG AND STAFF. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE REVIEWED  
ALL THE ENTRIES IN THE DESIGN COMPETITION AND HAVE  
SELECTED OUT AND CIRCULATED ALL CONTAINING WORKS  
ON SCULPTURE. SENATOR WARNER WILL CHAIR A MEETING  
THIS MONTH TO DISCUSS THESE ENTRIES AND ATTEMPT  
TO IDENTIFY ONE OR MORE ARTISTS WHO WILL BE INVITED  
TO SUBMIT CONCEPTUAL MODELS. WHEN THE SPECIFICS  
AND REFINEMENTS ARE DEVELOPED, THEY WILL BE SUBMITTED  
TO YOU FOR YOUR DETAILED REVIEW AND APPROVAL. WE  
WANT TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT AND  
REVIEW SO THAT ALL ELEMENTS CAN BE COMPLETED FOR  
THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL ON VETERANS DAY THIS  
NOVEMBER. YET, YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONCEPT  
AND THESE REFINEMENTS IS NEEDED TODAY IN ORDER THAT  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BASIC DESIGN MAY BE BEGUN THIS  
MONTH AND COMPLETED BY THAT TIME.

DEDICATION OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL  
MAJOR PATRIOTIC EVENT IN OUR HISTORY.  
HAS ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE  
PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A COMMEMORA-  
WE HAVE BEGUN PLANNING FOR A FULL  
ACTIVITIES SURROUNDING THE DEDICATION,  
NATIONAL SALUTE TO VIETNAM VETERANS. A CENTRAL  
EVENT CELEBRATION WILL BE A PARADE IN WHICH  
VETERANS CAN MARCH WITH THEIR OLD UNITS  
AND VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS. THE PLANNING  
FOR NATIONAL SALUTE IS DEPENDENT UPON MAINTAINING  
CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE. MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER,  
IS THE NATIONAL NEED TO HONOR AND RECOGNIZE  
VETERANS. IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING  
THE SALUTE WE HAVE PERCEIVED A STRONG NATIONAL  
SENTIMENT TO FINALLY BIND OUR WOUNDS OVER THAT  
TIME IS LATE, YET NONETHELESS, THE TIME  
IS FOR NOT ONLY THE VETERANS, BUT THE ENTIRE  
COUNTRY TO SUPPORT THIS MEMORIAL.

TO MEET THE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE,  
WE MUST OBTAIN A PERMIT TO BREAK GROUND WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS.  
THE COMMISSION MUST ACCEPT THE CONCEPTS OF  
THE MONUMENT AND STATUE IN ORDER FOR US TO MOVE AHEAD.  
I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO DO SO.

ING WITH THE VVMF IN THIS TESTIMONY  
CAN LEGION, THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE,  
OF FOREIGN WARS, MRS. REGINA WILK  
N GOLD STAR MOTHERS, MR. MILTON  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION, AND BRIGADIER  
PRICE, USA (RET). SPOKESMAN FOR  
ONS AND THE THREE INDIVIDUALS ARE  
HE INTEREST OF SAVING TIME, HOWEVER,  
PREPARED TESTIMONY, BUT WILL BE HAPPY  
IONS. I WISH TO NOTE THAT MRS.  
PRICE, THE LEGION AND THE VFW HAVE  
SUPPORTERS OF THE PROJECT, WHILE  
S LEAGUE AND MR. COPULUS HAVE BEEN  
MOST STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT THE  
E NECESSARY.

ON, I THANK YOU AGAIN FOR CONSIDERING  
Y, AND ON BEHALF OF THE 2.7 MILLION  
RVED THEIR COUNTRY IN VIETNAM,  
AKE IT POSSIBLE TO PROCEED WITH  
OF THIS LONG OVERDUE TRIBUTE.