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Salinas, Ca 93906
[REDACTED]

"Open Letter"

SUBJECT: WHO IS TO BLAME

January 21, 1991

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Dear Sir,

Our young soldiers have begun to pay the price, man's most valuable possession "life", in their efforts to insure world freedom, economic stability, and the liberation of a country, in their efforts to regain their freedom, and the American way of life. Once again, our nation has begun to divide, resorting to the Jane Fonda "learned behavior" era of the 60's. In spite your efforts and the efforts of our President, Congress, Generals and responsible citizens, the domino affect has begun.

The world has made a stance against open aggression. Our young soldiers will do our dirty work. The news media will report all aspects of the fighting. Spectators throughout the world are responding to, both the fighting and world reporting. As each of us tries to make a difference in a positive way, we aren't aware of the ripple affect created by our efforts. Certainly, protestors around the world have the inherited right and freedom to express themselves. Yet, the damage inflicted upon those on the battle field will take more lives than enemy missile and rifle fire. As the news media strives to out do one another, the domino affect continues. Protestors are fueled by the media, in their effort to gain national recognition. Unfortunately, a young soldier may ask; "Why is my mother, wife, and country against my efforts. Yesterday my friends died. Today, I have killed. Tomorrow I may die. Why don't they understand the guilt I feel for being here? Why don't they understand the shame I feel for having participated? Why don't they understand that I won't be able to talk about it or face the humiliation when it's over? Why haven't the professors and deans of our colleges instructed on the ill affects, damage, and psychological stress created by selfish and flagrant demonstrations? Don't they know that I am afraid, angry, ashamed, bitter, confused, embarrassed, harassed, humiliated, mixed up, regretful, sad, worried, and most of all, sorry. Have the most responsible persons in America lost their empathic understanding, the ability to perceive my feelings from my frame of reference. America's "fight or flight reaction" as a response to the danger in Saudi Arabia, will kill me if enemy gun fire doesn't. America's learned helplessness and acquisition of depressive behavior will defeat us, not Saddam Hussein and his army."

As I was trained and as I have fought, I will never surrender. If America is defeated, it will come from within. The domino affect will ripple America and the minds of men for generations to come. The choice is yours! Again, the true outcome of today's war will not be determined by our honorable President, gallant generals or brave soldiers, rather our news media, educators, and conscious awareness.

All the parades, Flags, and yellow ribbons in the world will not erase the shame, hurt, pain, and guilt for having participated. The choice is yours! May God bless you and the United States of America.

Sincerely yours,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

FEB 5 AMSU



ANCHORMAN OR AXEMAN?

After Tet shocked America, just how big a part did news anchorman, Walter Cronkite, play in polarising public opposition to the war in Vietnam?

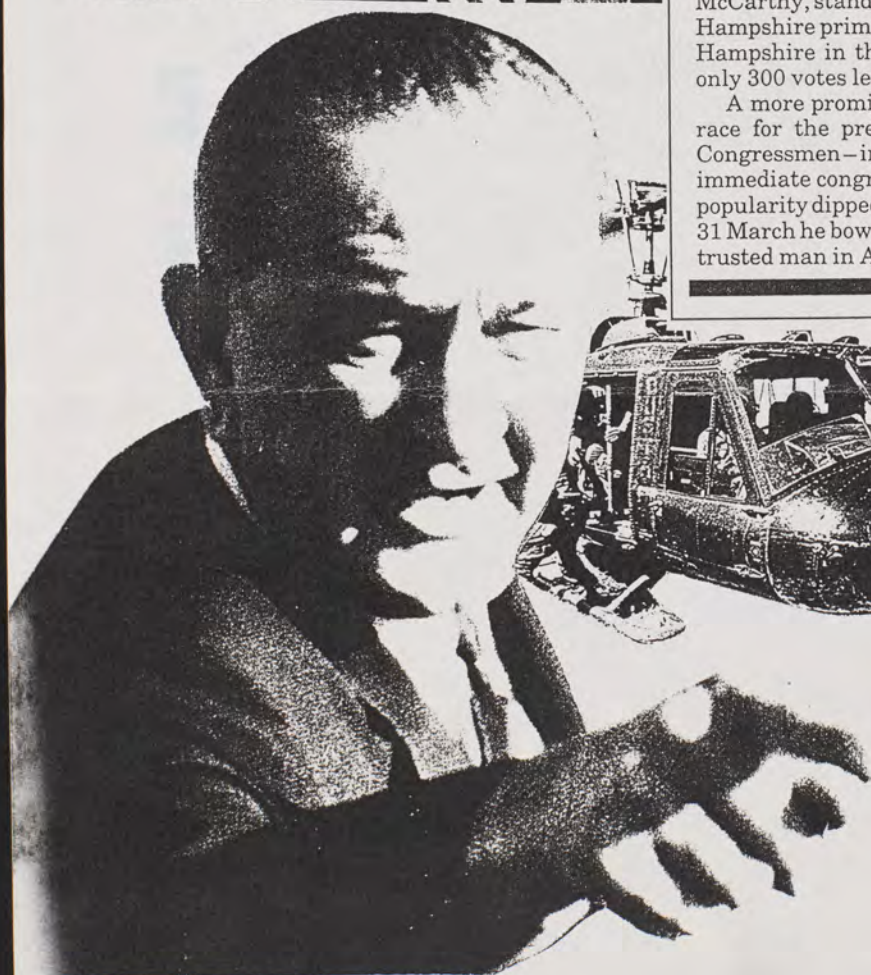
By 1968, Walter Cronkite, who had joined Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) 18 years earlier, was one of the most respected and influential anchormen on network television. According to one politician, Cronkite could change the way thousands of Americans voted 'by a mere inflection of his deep baritone voice, or by a lifting of his well-known bushy eyebrows'. From 1965 to 1968 Cronkite had adopted an even-handed approach to the reporting of the war, reflecting a general caution on the part of the major networks not to present the war and the Johnson Administration in an unfavourable light on national television. But even by October 1967, attitudes were changing. On the 7th, Cronkite introduced a news item that showed a young American soldier cutting off the ear of a dead VC.

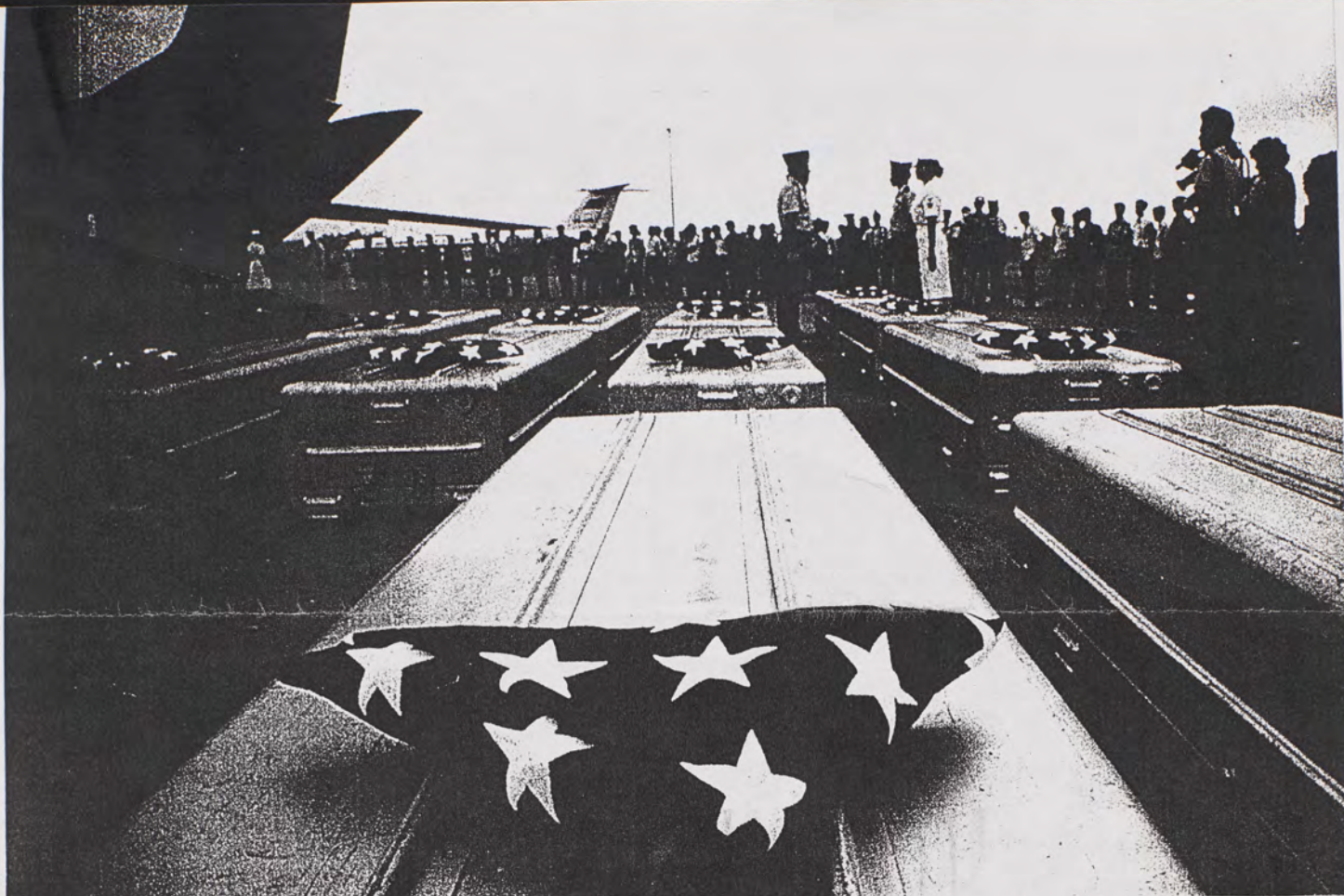
When the storm of the Tet Offensive broke in early 1968, middle America and Cronkite were shocked into action. As the VC attempted to blast their way into the US embassy in Saigon in the early hours of 31 January local time, the news reached America just before the evening news bulletins were to be transmitted. Confused initial reports suggested the embassy had been occupied and Cronkite reputedly exploded: 'What the hell is going on? I thought we were winning this war.'

The veteran newsman flew out to Saigon – his first visit since 1965 – to assess the situation. On 27 February, in a rare personal report on CBS, he announced that it was 'more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in stalemate'. Cronkite saw only one solution to the morass in which America was now firmly embroiled – negotiations with Hanoi. President Johnson, watching the broadcast in the White House, turned to his press secretary and remarked: 'if I've lost Walter, I've lost Mr Average Citizen'.

But Cronkite was reflecting rather than guiding public opinion. On 20 February the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had begun televised hearings questioning the necessity of the war, while two days later, MACV had announced the highest ever weekly total of 543 US combat deaths. For Johnson, even worse was to follow. On 12 March the virtually unknown Senator Eugene McCarthy, standing as a peace candidate, won 42 per cent of the poll in the New Hampshire primary. In this, a battle to find the Democratic candidate for New Hampshire in the forthcoming presidential elections, McCarthy had polled only 300 votes less than Johnson himself.

A more prominent peace candidate, Senator Robert Kennedy, entered the race for the presidential nomination four days later. On 18 March, 139 Congressmen – including 41 Democrats – sponsored a resolution demanding an immediate congressional review of Johnson's Vietnam policy. The president's popularity dipped from an approval rating of 48 per cent to one of 36 per cent. On 31 March he bowed out of the presidential race altogether. Cronkite – 'the most trusted man in America' – had put the final nail in Johnson's coffin.





"I will never forgive or forget those who protested
against those who did their dirty work, during our troublesome times,
abandoning us and dividing our nation, in spite
their self-justified reasons.

Nor will I let you forget us!

My entire life has been wasted. My friends lives were wasted. Our blood was wasted.

I will never allow you to forget our pain, humiliation, anger, isolation,
self-defeating ways, and shame
for having gone the distance.

We asked nothing of you or our country, instead,
what we could do for our country.

We asked nothing other than trust, support, and loyalty.

In exchange for this, we were willing to die.

It was not, so much, the fighting, horrors, trauma and dying, rather
our nations abandonment, division, and discarding
of us, like stenching garbage, that lingers on.

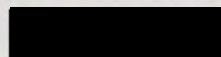
I am an American fighting man!

I will never forgive, forget, nor surrender.

And, in spite my deficiencies, I will die in the service of my country, defending
the Constitution of these United States, the President of these United States,
my fellow soldiers, and the land I call home, from all enemies
foreign and domestic!

UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE SHALL FALL.

May God bless you and the United States of America."



"Vietnam Vet, and DAMN proud of it"



Draft Destroyer Caught in the Act



In top photo, Charles Friend (left), 22, and Walter Skinner, 25, watch as fire consumes records taken from Los Angeles Army induction center. Skinner looked down to discover his clothes afire. Below, Friend and a passerby roll Skinner on pavement to douse flames. Police later arrested Skinner, unhurt, and Friend on burglary charges. (AP Radiophoto)



SUMMARY

For combat related disorders, the VA Medical Center, Palo Alto, California (Menlo Park Division), under the direction of Fred Gusman, M.S.W., was established, being the first inpatient program for combat veterans. It was opened in January of 1978. The program is designed to help the veteran who suffers from complex symptoms that appear to be related to his, or her combat exposure's. Since the awareness of post-traumatic stress disorders, the great majority of admitted patients have, in fact, experienced acute psychopathological symptoms, and engaged in behaviors that directly threaten their own lives and/or the lives of those around them.

The objectives of the program are to relieve the acute psychological distress, and to assist in intergrating his, or her combat experience, and to understand that experience, in relationship to his, or her current life stresses. To reconnect the veteran with his, or her family, and develop a supportive network, and to help the veteran return to society. The program is a therapeutic community consisting of "Vets helping Vets" with one common bond, being their participation, and unselfish service to their country.

The PTSD program attempts to develop the patients trust, in both staff, and fellow veterans, relieve distress, and resolve current crises. Secondly, the veteran reviews his, or her pre, and post war lives, and begins to integrate their memories of war, with their other life experiences. The emphasis is to recognize that war experiences represent only a small, although important part of our lives.

Finally, through the help, and support of fellow veterans, and dedicated staff, the veteran will begin his, or her community reentry process. The veteran is encouraged to recreate a solid support network consisting of family, friends, support groups, and Outreach Centers. Education, work, and socialization are only some of the areas that trained, and devoted counselors, therapist, psychologists, and psychiatrists assist the veteran as they prepare to return to society.

We, the people of the United States of America, have nursed the wounds of an unpopular war, that ended in protest, and a division of common goals, and standards of freedom. The ghost within each of us has held our heads down, forbidding us to speak the truth, of a shame that continues to cause great pain. The wars of yesteryear have long since passed, yet the road home, for many, remains a, seemingly, impossible one. Today there are people who care and understand what we went through. My self-fulfilling prophecy is to, some day, help others like myself, make the trip home.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders
THE THREE SIDED MIRROR

Pre Event (Instilled Values)

Post-Traumatic Event (Changed Values)

" WAR IN THE GULF "

Trauma

Chaos
 Anger
 Rage
 Anxiety
 Stress
 Withdrawal
 Fear
 Survival

Emotional Numbing
 Coping Skills
 Personal Conflicts
 Depression

 Denouncing of Religion
 Loss of Friends
 "It don't mean nothing"
 Loss of Identity

Alcohol & Drug Abuse

Who Am I?
 Alienation
 Anti Social
 Guilt for, having done
 Guilt for, not having done
 Guilt for, should have done
 Shame
 Loss of Self Image
 Loss of Pride
 Loss of Trust
 Loss of Integrity and Humility
 Anti Religious (non believer)
 Self-Punishing
 Mistrust
 Over Protective of Family
 Rejection
 Fantasize
 Memory Impairment
 Tendency for Anger and Rage
 Suicidal Feelings and Thoughts

Military

Pre

* Adolescents

*

Childhood

Friendships

Relatives

Trust

Religion (Beliefs)

Pride (Instilled)
 Identity

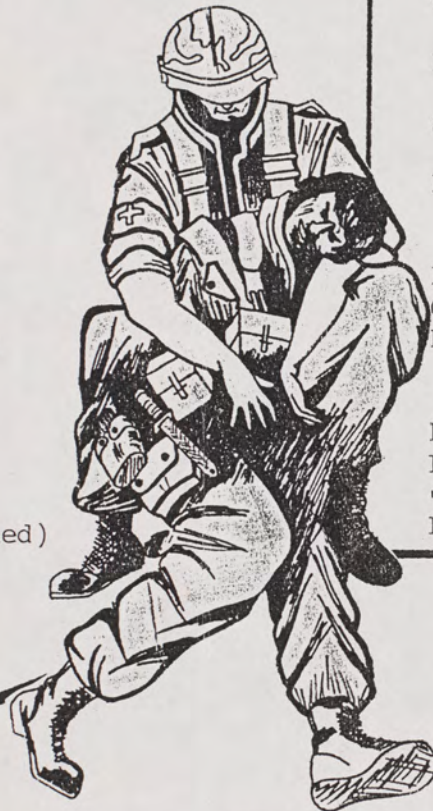
School
 School Friendships

Environment

Confidence
 Support
 Integrity (Instilled)

Humility

Survival Skills



The Three Sided Mirror is to help you understand why victims of traumatic events react to situations the way they do. In order to better understand PTSD, we must look back through their lives to see how their beliefs, dreams, and values were developed. Look at your life patterns, which were developed over the years, and try to imagine how life would be after a traumatic event.