

The Sun Is Getting High in the Sky and I Am the Last Speaker of the Day

Veterans have been ridiculed by our public officials and our media as racist because we oppose a monument to soldiers of a foreign government in Veterans Memorial Park.

Because of the frustrated comments of a few, Veterans collectively have been accused of being dangerous.

It is abundantly clear that we have failed to teach the value of patriotism to our community and failed to impress on a few of our fellow Veterans, and at least one City councilmember, the imperative of self-control and civility.

One part of Patriotism is love of country. In America, we share a love of country felt by people all over the world. This part of Patriotism is based on our natural love of family, home, community and all things familiar. America has a long history of absorbing new people from foreign lands, and when a new people come to America, they long for what they left behind. It is difficult for these newcomers to feel the same love for a new land that they feel for the land of their birth. Their faces are turned toward remembering the homeland they left.

In America we also celebrate another aspect of Patriotism; this Patriotism is based on the deep-rooted belief that America represents an ideal of democracy, justice and equality for all people that is unparalleled throughout the world. We feel this so deeply and so strongly that we believe it worth the sacrifice of the lives of our youth. We make this sacrifice not only for our American homeland, not only for our love of our families, our homes and our communities, but for the principle that the people of the world are entitled to live in a free and democratic society. It is our Constitution that embodies this ideal and it is the men and women of the American Armed Forces who leave their homes, their families and their communities to uphold and defend **with their lives** our Constitution against all who would oppose democracy, justice and equality for all people.

The right to be memorialized as a veteran in this park is not gained by polite social nods from a few politically ambitious multi-culturalists. In America, a lump of concrete and metal does not create respect or honor. The American service men and women memorialized in this park earned the right to our respect and honor by their service in the Armed Forces of these United States in defense of the Constitution of our United States. The claim of a right to a memorial for any other reason shows a grave misunderstanding of what these memorials mean and disrespects the sacrifice of our military and their families.

We invite the Vietnamese Community to join the riches of your culture to the multitude of cultures of other people who have come together in America, remember the land of your birth and cherish your distinct language and culture, but we insist that you leave your political and military allegiances and affiliations behind you in the country you lost and left. Join us, as Americans together, in recognizing the service and sacrifice of those men and women of all races, religions, and national origins, who served together in the United States Armed Forces.

Linda Kirby