

Letter to Councilman Jeff Longwell
By a American Legion Post 419 Member
06/17/2009

Councilman Jeff Longwell,

First of all, Sir, I would like to thank you for the fine service you have provided this District. Your service, like those of your years in the Maize Schools, continues to be admirable.

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of your District, a retired Marine who served this great Country of ours for 25 years, and an active member of the American Legion Post 419 in Maize. This letter references the proposed South Vietnam Memorial that is under consideration by the City Council for construction within the Wichita Veterans Park.

I served this great country of ours in Vietnam back in the 60's - my memories are still fresh. And I will tell you that I have great respect for all of those who sacrificed themselves in this cause, both American, Vietnamese, Koreans, Australians, etc. However, I do firmly believe that the intent of our Veterans Park is to honor, in a public manner, those Americans who served in the United States armed forces in all our battles, past, present, and future. This Veterans Park was not built to honor those from another country - no matter how noble the cause of those individuals in the support of their country. This small area is our community's memorial to our country's service men and women; it is an American place; hallowed ground for Veterans of America's Armed Forces. Please, let's keep it that way and not break that trust.

I also believe that the Vietnamese people living here in Wichita have every right to erect and memorialize their military population. I harbor no ill feelings towards these fine people living here in our town. Accordingly, there is no reason why the City should not assist them in this cause as long as this monument is somewhere other than within the Veterans Park.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I do hope that you will support your District and all the Veterans who so strongly oppose the construction of this Vietnamese Memorial in the Veterans Park.

Best regards,

Kris Thorsten
Capt USMC (Ret)