

Mr. Jesus Rodriguez

January 31, 1995

Dear Mr. Pope:

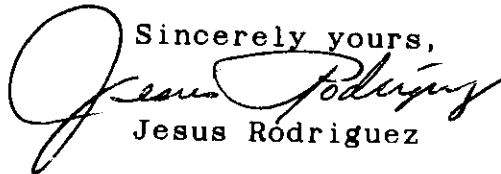
I have been wanting to express my most sincere sympathies with the goals and endeavors you have committed yourself to accomplish on behalf of all the LRP vets of Co. E and C.

The first thing I want to talk about is that life has not been too easy for all of us who served during the Vietnam "conflict". Enough is known about all the injustices we have gone through for serving in the most unpopular war Americans have been involved in. Nevertheless, it is worthy of mentioning that even though many problems have been corrected our struggle to be sincerely recognized should continue. Since you have taken the task to lead us in getting a well deserved recognition, I would like to acknowledge your initiative. I would also like to join in helping you accomplish your goal. The second thing that I would like to mention is that I just received a letter indicating that at last the VA will be compensating vets who suffered from Hodgkin's disease as secondary to herbicides (Agent Orange Exposure). It would be of great help for other veterans to have this information available. I filed a claim after I became sick with Hodgkin's disease in 1980. Since that time until now, I have been battling with the VA and I still have not been compensated for all the scars I have in my body and for the emotional stress I have had to cope with after having tumors removed from my body, and the chemotherapy I had to endure to survive the disease. In addition, all the radiation I received during nuclear medicine examinations and x-ray examinations made me sterile before I got married. That means I cannot conceive my own children. This is another emotional burden I have had to put my wife through. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that even though the odds have been adverse for many of us we should never give up and continue to lead the most constructive life. After becoming sick with Hodgkin's disease I had to disrupt my college studies. I struggled and worked as hard as I could without receiving any financial assistance from the VA. When I felt better I tried to resume my studies. I only needed 6 months to finish my BA degree as an English teacher but the VA was so adamant that it denied those six months of financial assistance because time had expired according to bureaucratic red-tape. I told them about my hardship with Hodgkin's. The hardship I went through was never considered. Nonetheless, I managed to go on my own and finished college. I now hold a MS degree in Special Education and I am looking forward to finish a Doctorate degree as a School Psychologist. I have also become computer literate and look forward to establishing and working

in an internet computerized system at my work-place. I am willing to offer any assistance involving computer work (word-processing) or internet communications as soon as the system is installed and I become familiar with the system. I also have a computer at home with a send-receive fax modem. At this time I have not been able to use the modem due to a write-protect virus that entered my hard-drive. I must have it repaired. As soon as I solve this problem I am willing to be of any assistance to you and the organization.

In addition, enclosed you will find a list of some of the brothers that were in Company E 4th platoon in 1968 during the "FIRST TET OFFENSIVE" and who I have never forgotten. This is a photocopy of Air Medal Recipients. I am also glad to have found the name of one brother called Lowry, James L. I wish to get in contact with this brother pretty soon. I would be most appreciative if you include his address and of others I have included in the back of the Data Base Questionnaire. The list is almost exactly 26 years old. I was so amazed when I received your letter because the other day I was getting rid of some old papers that I thought were worthless. As I was going through the papers I saw the list of names on the list I am sending you and I threw it away in a plastic trash bag but then for a moment I hesitated and began to read some of the names. I felt like some magical force was telling me not to throw it away. So I said to my self: "What the heck! it's been with me all this time why should I get rid of it? You'd never know when you might need it to get in contact with one of the buddies". And so it happened. I will never throw it away now. I am going to frame it because now it has history. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

P. S. I would like to pay for membership dues and become an active member of the organization. I will be calling Roy pretty soon to request an application. I am also writing to Michael Warner for moral support. Until then brother!

Sincerely yours,  
  
Jesus Rodriguez