

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

May 1, 1995

Mr. Garnett E. Bell, President
National Veterans Research Center
4209 Boys Ranch Road
Lavaca, AR 72941

Dear Sir:

Your letter (Enc. 1; see att.) responding to the "NOW" program broadcast was well done and it was good to know that an organized veterans group responded.

For seven years, 1985-1992, I was Gen. Westmoreland's New York City Veterans' Affairs advisor prior to our family relocating to Connecticut. During that period I had the opportunity for contacting various media outlets on the General's behalf as well as a particular Vietnam veterans' organization responding to media remarks in broadcasting that generally cast a dishonorable light on the Vietnam veteran. "Losing the war" in Vietnam I recall was a frequent topic in those years.

Even recently during the so-called 20th Anniversary of the fall of Saigon here and there comments are picked up in print and broadcast alluding to defeat being assigned to America among others. Perhaps less so than 20 years ago.

At any rate I am taking the liberty of enclosing my History/Logic Paper that the General himself adapted for using in his lectures as well as drawing reference in his autobiography's new foreward. (Enc. 2; att. references) (Enc. 3; History/Logic Paper)

Perhaps your organization may find my enclosed History/Logic Paper useful in further arguing against so-called U.S. defeat in Vietnam as future conditions and occasion will permit. If so then please feel free to implement same as you deem appropriate or useful. I am happy to contribute it for your reference.

In any event a nation's own history is important to the ongoing psychology of its culture and society, i.e. the national mind that is if our country today may be said to have one; and so the General and I always believed that it should be the people of the nation itself who determine its own history rather than people of another persuasion and/or loyalty. The whole matter today is a struggle and so I wanted to write as a party of one and say thank you for rising to the occasion and taking time to respond. I know the burden of writing letters such as that and can appreciate your effort in that regard.

In fact, on a personal note, I remember seeing the broadcast referred and it bothered me that I was neither in the capacity of actively speaking for a veterans' organization any longer nor with resources as well as time available to immediately respond as I was in the habit of doing, almost like a reflex, beginning about 1980; at times getting off as much as 75-100 letters a week at one point; but life and circumstances change along with the birth of my first child so I had to take a step back from such an active role and get my family out of New York City. I still go down to the City on occasion, more as a spectator to Veterans' Affairs these days, I try to keep abreast of things. Anyhow I was given a stack of literature for taking back up to Connecticut to read up on shortly before last Christmas. Eventually I came across your article as I was doing my catch-up reading last winter. I set that issue of The U.S. Veteran Dispatch aside and determined to write this letter. It took awhile but I got to it.

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-2-

May 1, 1995

If I may please be permitted Sir, and I can appreciate the burden and responsibility of heading an organization as well as the inconvenience of having to read mounds of paper; and a multi-page letter takes time to read; but if I may then be allowed to share some comments and information I obtained through my experience with the media in NYC as well as some introductory explanation about the History/Logic Paper (which is a condensed version). My hope is that something I pass on will be useful to you and your organization and/or others of similar and loyal orientation:

1. Enemy propaganda may only be defeated by opposing friendly propaganda, that is, from a psychological-operational viewpoint.
2. The best way to undermine current prevailing propaganda is to attack by undermining its "truth" value.
3. In Logic, for an argument to be correct; or, "sound" as the logician terms it; the argument must be both "valid" as well as "true". These are specific terms in Logic, somewhat at variance with the normal use outside logic. Logically, valid means correct according to the mechanics of Logic, and has nothing whatsoever to do with truth. Truth has its own definition in Logic, and may, vary according to the logician. Generally it is my understanding that most, not all, but most logicians adhere to the "Correspondence theory of Truth". Logic, which is a subdivision of philosophy treats truth theoretically, as does all philosophy for obvious reasons. (See Enc. 3; Hist./Logic Paper; section on Fallacies in Logic for specific definitions above)
4. The Correspondence Theory of Truth, the one adhered to in my History/Logic Paper and which is the prevailing theory of truth today among so-called "intellectuals" (which I maintain have betrayed our country; in other words they know better than to accept "America was defeated in Vietnam" yet they emphasize what they want regardless of so-called truth; so that everything seems to be more at a propagandistic struggle these days). Anyhow my point is; I have used their own tools to prove them wrong. Let me just elaborate a bit on this "truth" aspect since it is so key to my point here. The Correspondence Theory of Truth basically defines truth by mass custom and usage as well as consensus. For example, we say that it is true that rain is "wet". Why? Because "wet" is the quality, in our language; and linguistics plays a part but that is secondary to my point; that through custom and usage has been accepted by all people regarded "sane" that describes the quality assigned to rain. Now losing a war has generally come to mean through prior custom and usage, defeat on the battlefield, surrender, the nation invaded and occupied by the opposing side. North Vietnam never did that to our nation. And that's how it is, or, the state of affairs that has traditionally come to describe "losing a war". Ofcourse Vietnam was compounded by the fact it was a so-called "undeclared" war and/or civil war, whatever you want to call it. But by custom and usage it has become to be known as the Vietnam War. If that is the case, then the traditional means of losing a war should also be assigned to it. I never stressed that point though because the other side would be quick to say, "oh well we all know it wasn't really a war anyway, it was a police action". So you have to also anticipate what the other side will respond. I keep it that it was generally speaking a war, and wars are lost on the battlefield by whichever troops are participating in the fighting at the time of defeat. (And any sane person should recognize at once that's true, and, "how it is")

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-3-

May 1, 1995

5. The other side may attempt to poo-poo logic, so to speak. I have always nipped that in the bud by saying, look, Logic must mean something. If Logic doesn't mean anything then why do every college and University, practically in the world, teach courses in Logic? Why are computers programmed via Logic? What has to be kept in mind however is elusive; it is not so much that saying the USA was defeated in Vietnam is illogical per se; according to the rules of Logic fallacious arguments that are valid can be posed that the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam...mechanically they follow the laws of Logic, or, rules of inference as they are called by logicians. But they are not "true"; common sense tells us something is wrong; and for an argument to be fully correct or "sound" in Logic it must be both valid and true. For effect purposes I present it from the general approach that it is "illogical" to argue U.S. defeat in Vietnam; but again it has to be kept in mind that it is often so-called "validity" in Logic that makes false statements seem true. People may say, oh that's logical; yes the way a false argument is constructed, it may within the confines of its own universe follows all the rules of logic, while at the same time arriving at a perfectly false conclusion. Not unlike the direction our nation is headed in some areas. Here I must take leave as the so-called philosopher, since politics is not my "department" or specialty. Philosophy has generally been described over the centuries as a "search for truth". Hence what I offer today, is identifying falsity via Logic, for moving toward a Logic in historical thought about U.S. involvement in the Vietnam Era. Note also I don't complicate things by over reaching the argument to include Laos and Cambodia; it could be done but the argument has to be kept simple, because it is complicated enough as you can see. Not difficult, just complicated. Generally in this regard it is the Historical Summary portion of my Paper that has been most widely circulated among veterans. Why? Most people are taken aback when they have to read more than one page. I know I am. Again that is often our national problem, the people directing our insane course are often book worms themselves; skilled at manipulation of words and linguistics. But here we have them dead in the water; logically speaking that is.

To sum up this section; and again, I realize the weight of such a long letter, but I felt I should pass on one of the few remaining copies of my History/Logic paper to you and your organization, since gathering dust in my files helps no one:

The problem all along here has been circulation to veterans. We mailed thousands of copies out; mostly the Historical Summary; since it was just one page; but all this explanation and analysis; we just didn't have the resources and time for mailing out a handbook on this subject, or whatever you want to call it. I felt your organization would be a good candidate for a recipient of my work and at least will not disregard it. It is important for Vietnam veterans, as many as possible, to be exposed and fully grasp this argument. It's not really difficult and one doesn't have to be an expert in Logic, everything is self-contained in the History/Logic Paper. It's important for Vietnam veterans to realize that there is another viewpoint other than "U.S. defeat in Vietnam," etc., and one that has greater truth value...that's important...the stress on truth. And it is true.

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-4-

May 1, 1995

Just last evening, 30-April-1995, there was a CNN broadcast, VIETNAM: Coming To Terms. This is a typical example. Two of the broadcasters, Arnett and Bierbauer, opened and closed the broadcast and both framed Vietnam as a U.S. defeat. Then in between the broadcast they had two different veterans' viewpoints. So who do they choose? General Westmoreland; ofcourse as a leader, we know already the General's viewpoint. The media also knows, they hope anyhow, he would be perceived as "unrepresentative" of the average veteran, if for no other reason then for his greatly superior rank. Next they choose the opposite viewpoint, a 1971 National Guard artilleryman; whose entire unit went over, was drafted over late in the war when the futility and loser mentality was running high even among veterans. This unit was described as being over run...they had something like 12 KIA. I don't want to compare, but I'm sorry, I don't called that being overrun for an entire artillery brigade as I recall the unit comprised. Ofcourse my view is biased. I was with 1st Btn., 9th Marines and for us to be overrun required at least 50% casualties; and often times we still prevailed on the battlefield, with such greater casualties. But regardless, this was evidently enough to make this former Guardsman and Vietnam combat veteran announce before the CNN cameras after the General's remarks, some time later in the 2 hour or so broadcast that, " we lost ". A really representative view of veterans? Hardly. Then ofcourse CNN had the advantage of being the organization in control of the medium outlet, to be able to both open and close the broadcast with remarks that Vietnam was a U.S. defeat. They have an unfair advantage. So you see, Logic aside, truth aside, they hold control to the means of propaganda. That is the great advantage that media tyrants hold over our "national mind", the power to influence; change truth into falsehood; sell black as white; bad as good; my question really is deeper...why? I'm not really sure. Saying or trying to brainwash the American nation that we were defeated in Vietnam is only a symptom of a much larger infection within our body politic; it is a symptom not a cause. But again I begin to stray from my own specialty as so-called philosopher and/or historian and stop short of the political perimeter. I know my limitations. I think my point is clear however. Some foreign element; or foreign way of thinking...which is to say...foreign to what the formerly common understanding of what is truly "American" is being subverted here; indeed; attempted to be manipulated and changed; not unlike a stubborn, mutating virus. Why? Do they seek to control our national mind; our so-called mentality? Why? The communist threat is pretty well contained in the world; it serves no purpose to be part of a larger communist conspiracy. So what is the point? Is it power to ultimately make money?

CNN dropped one clue that I picked up. In closing the commentator as I recall harped away on how America must come to terms with the " psychology of defeat ". Now stop a moment and analyze that. Forget about Logic for a moment. Who is it in this country responsible for creating the so-called psychology of defeat anyway? The Vietnam combat veteran? It is the media. Those in control of this awesome tool for propaganda. They wanted to create and maintain a "psychology of defeat" in our nation. Why? That's the question. Afterall following the Persian Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union I think America is past the psychology of defeat; at least as it pertains to our nation today; but it does put a lasting stain on our proud history. Who would want to do that? Obviously those who took the so-called moral and political stand against the war at one time; and whose egos and sense of self-importance far outweighed the collective good of our national body and national mind. A type of personality that sees itself as "better than" everyone else.

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-5-

May 1, 1995

The utter lunacy and contradiction is seen at once in the kind of CNN broadcast; that these manipulators of reality for their own self ends and career profit offered; as so-called intellectual food for our national mind...when in fact it is of the most deadliest variety of mental poisoning there is, "one-ups-manship" or, "I'm better than you"; in order to wield secure financial power it is vital to wield a psychological advantage...that ultimately translates...I'm better than you...so your rules don't apply to me...I'm special...I tell you what to do, you don't tell me. What type of insane, undemocratic, foreign ego is this? Does it come from outer space; from another planet? That's another issue. But clearly these manipulators would be ready to work with the little green men from mars, if they exist, who would come up to CNN and say "take me to your leader". The CNN broadcasters would say, "Look no further, we are the leaders."

So what is the contradiction here? It is this: They name the broadcast... "Coming To Terms"...yet did they? It was generalities. To come to terms means to define and analyze. Logic comes to terms and defines and analyzes. Obviously they wouldn't want to come to terms with U.S. defeat in Vietnam in logical terms.

Finally; who does such nonsense about defeat in Vietnam really hurt? "America"? America isn't really affected. The Vietnam veteran was America in Vietnam. It is the disabled Vietnam combat veteran hurt most of all by this kind of insanity as well as the surviving next of kin and families, relatives, friends of our POW/MIA's still unaccounted for. The media, most of it, doesn't care. Their ends must be served first. If their ends are served, and they can help out and look good, they might entertain a little indulging with the POW/MIA issue but only when it benefits their purpose; that's my general perception. Ofcourse there are exceptions. How much better of a chance would our POW/MIA issue have if the overall perception of Vietnam was not continually forced to our national mind as a U.S. defeat; but rather the same consistency focused on a noble cause, South Vietnam's defeat, and the issue of resolving our POW/MIA question. In the back of many people's minds may be the sense; oh they are not holding any POW's and if so then they are losers anyway; the heck with them. This is not Logic, this is just common sense as far as I'm concerned. Anyhow I have rambled on here far too long and I must conclude. Let me briefly offer some interesting information I learned about the NYC media. I will report it briefly and then wrap up. I apologize for perhaps going on for too long, and burdening you with such a weighty communication. My hope is you may find something useful here in my words that you may be able to adapt for your own organization's purposes. If so then please feel free. I'm happy to offer research, information or comment that you may be able to use some other way. My name need not even be connected with any of these comments. It's better that way.

Ideally this other viewpoint of America undefeated/winning in Vietnam should be carried to every Vietnam Era veteran. Back in 1983/1984 a certain Vietnam veterans organization obtained the names and addresses, computer tapes, from the VA of veterans. As a bonafide veterans organization they could use these tapes for mailings to veterans in connection with their services to veterans. Ofcourse there had to be a mailing permit, that at the time, Coors beer was covering this vets' organization's quarterly publication. So, one quarter, the newspaper didn't get out, as our Founder decided to run for Congress and leadership began to get loose, so, evidently before the VA got their tapes back over 3 million of the enclosed Historical Summaries went out, just the one page, to Vietnam Era veterans.

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-6-

May 1, 1995

We worked for three months, day and night, with over 300 veterans and often their families involved stuffing envelopes. We were working with last known addresses often; sometimes updated addresses. No return addresses were used with the hope some of the mail with outdated addresses might be forwarded. It was a massive project. How many of the Historical Summaries actually reached Vietnam veterans? How many were actually read and helped persuade the veterans that there was another alternative thinking other than "America was defeated in Vietnam"? God only knows. Shortly after that the short-lived Vietnam veterans organization was broken up for political/financial reasons and merged with other organizations by 1988. My point is, all that effort, it is but a drop in the bucket compared to the massive power and influence wielded by the video media. Perhaps the internet computer medium offers a solution. But something done is better than nothing.

The message has to be passed on to other veterans by the individual Vietnam veteran himself. Nothing is more subversive than to have another veteran announce before the media, "we lost". The media can then say, "there you see. Even veterans themselves know that America was defeated." If given a chance the enclosed History/Logic viewpoint almost always changes a person's perspective about the terms used in winning/losing the Vietnam War. The people didn't lose; it first of all wasn't even a declared war. The combat veterans didn't lose. So who's left? Politicians ofcourse...something no wise military man or ex-military man wants to tangle with, generally speaking. Everyone has their limitations. But if every veteran passed on the enclosed viewpoint to one other veteran, at least our other existing viewpoint would be able to demand equal time with the present view shoved down America's throat. Why should an unAmerican viewpoint be allowed to dictate our own History?

While in NYC, as a National Officer for a certain Vietnam veterans organization that bloomed during the 1980's then faded into other organizations, I had the opportunity to write to the media about Veterans' Affairs as well as winning/losing among others. Here is an interesting observation I made that may be helpful:

My experience finally showed me that the "reasoning" is better left with other veterans, or historians, or the average American. The media personnel have their viewpoint period. Toward the end I found not even to waste my time writing to them but to go over their heads to their sponsors. When you tamper with the media's sponsors, that is their purse strings, results are always guaranteed. I might send one letter to the media, then whether or not they respond, wait say 30 days, or, 3 months, or whatever and then collect 20 or 30 addresses of their sponsors and send a computer print out letter to the sponsor with a xerox copy of the letter sent to the media. I only figured this out in the end. And only tried it in connection with POW/MIA coverage. I wrote to only three sponsors at first. I got results. The show was cancelled the next season due to low ratings. I also sent copies of the original letter to the Neilsen rating organization in NYC. Did my letters really cause the show to be cancelled? Who knows? But I do know I got personal calls from the t.v. show's producer. The problem is you have to represent a Vietnam veterans' organization, which at the time I was a National Officer and acting National Commander with a splinter group, so I had the letterheads and so-called authority of representation. Then, since we were also a member of the National Vietnam Veterans Coalition, I tacked on, that we "represented" over 250,000 Vietnam veterans, family and friends; all consumers of the sponsor's product.

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-7-

May 1, 1995

Did the t.v. producer bother calling up Tom Burch to check if our organization had coordinated with every member of the National Vietnam Veterans Coalition? No ofcourse not. A little deceptive? Maybe. But we did represent them in a way. You fight fire with fire. What is the lesser of two evils? I exaggerated a little. So what. Who is the media to go around saying we lost the Vietnam war? Believe me when you hit their sponsors it's like dropping artillery onto their base camp; they panic and run in all directions. They never once bothered to check just how many Vietnam veterans were really going to "boycott" their products at the supermarket. All the sponsors wanted to know was why the t.v. station hadn't answered our letter, or, their response was unsatisfactory to us. The t.v. producers are worried they will lose their sponsors. The secret is in writing a letter that so panics them they go into action without thinking. Fear of losing their sponsors is so great, believe me, they respond, they call. They want to know, well, what is it you want? I made them put something in writing. Words to the effect they would never again make such a show without consulting our organization, or, at least taking our viewpoint into consideration, or, the boycott of their sponsor's product would be permanent. Ofcourse we wrote to the sponsor saying our boycott would be permanent anyway unless and until the offending program was cancelled, the producer fired, their advertising withdrawn and/or we received a satisfactory response from the station's manager or the program's producer. I strung them out for several weeks. Had them leave messages on answering machines a few times, then called them back after hours, leaving messages on their machines; sorry I missed you, will get back to you; I mean I really enjoyed it. They were upset, you could sense. The more upset they were the more pain I sought to inflict upon them; mental pain. The shoe was on the other foot. I never got around to implementing this strategy with the winning/losing argument. It would probably work just as well; based on a complaint that the insensitivity of such a broadcast, that America was defeated in Vietnam, is insensitive to disabled Vietnam veterans, especially amputees, or people who have no voice. We therefore represent numerous disabled Vietnam veterans who believe they won the war; that is, up until the 1973 political Ceasefire.(My letters were about POW issue only).

The biggest task is obtaining names and addresses of the network's sponsors. Usually after the product has been identified if it's not a big name brand, often it can be traced to a huge multi-national corporation. In fact I don't bother with the small sponsors. It's their large advertising accounts that you want to go after. The bigger the better like Ford, Proctor and Gamble, Johnson and Johnson; those are the sponsors who throw big bucks to the network's advertising accounts: tv's business. The networks..don't want those big sponsors tampered with; that's their bread and butter. Believe me the strategy works everytime. I have just never implemented it in the winning/losing context. I don't think, at least for sponsors, it is good to combine the issues; in that way the effect is weakened and in the end piddles away. I personally like the approach, but in the fast-moving media and corporate world people want simple problems and simple solutions. So my advice would be complain about one issue at a time. And the solution is simple: either promise us in writing you won't say that again, or, you will allow equal time, equal response, by equal number of people on each side; your demands have to be formed according to changing conditions at the time. If your demands are not met then the x number of consumers/vets who you represent, regrettably, will have to permanently boycott the product unless and until the sponsor is able to find out why such and such a network is so insensitive. That's a good word for throwing up to them; the networks are "insensitive". As a foot note I will add that there is an outstanding corporate address directory

L. J. SEAVY-CIOFFI
P.O. Box 2934
Danbury, CT 06813

Mr. Garnett E. Bell

-8-

May 1, 1995

for all major corporate headquarters listed annually in the WORLD ALMANAC & Book of Facts, available in every major U.S. bookstore practically. It is in the index under corporations, in the subdivision "Business directory". And ofcourse the local public library can assist just as well also.

How many sponsors should be written to? Well the more the better. The most I ever wrote to at one time was ten. Response rate is about 90-100%. Some sponsors respond without taking action maybe, 10%. But most write to the networks. The networks always respond. Because you see they have to respond back to their sponsor. So you see the hassle this kind of operation causes the network. Ofcourse I would put in, my promise to the network, never, never, to do this again; that is, if they never, never do what they did again, and, put it in writing; because you see we have to prove it to our membership; but we promise not to make this public. It's a negotiating type of thing. So when you hit 10, better say, 20, 30 of their sponsors; can you imagine? All the networks want is for this to stop. They don't even want to lose one sponsor; because you see; the way network t.v. makes money is from the sponsors. Our complaint to the sponsor is; hey; our loyalty is to you and your outstanding product; we give you our money for your product (because we like you) and then you turn around and give our money that was for you, and your product, to this network here who causes mental pain and suffering to our memberships' disabled Vietnam veterans, and widows, and surviving families, etc., etc., and so on. You have to craft the letter according to circumstances. You may want to take a long time to perfect such a letter; the demands, etc., then it can be reduced to a computer form print-out; with a few changes here and there; the same approach used again and again. I never had the aid of a computer print out in New York City, all my letters were either individually typed or xerox reproductions, like the Historical Summary. Anyway I thought I should pass this information on. I am unable to be active these days, to any substantive degree, but I can still pass on information. And so after reading you letter (attached) and in light of the recent broadcasts by CNN I thought may be you and your organization may find my info useful.

If so then please feel free to incorporate any and all of my writing, my info, strategy, comments into your operations or publications where deemed useful. It is unnecessary to refer to my name, in fact it is better you do not refer to me; as I said I am merely an advisor or philosopher or whatever you want to call it; not a public figure or veterans' representative at this point. I don't need publicity. I am happy for my work to be passed on and to be helpful or useful in that regard. Your organization can claim my work either as its own, or refer to it with my express permission and again no need to mention my name in connection with it. The main thing is to pass it on. They can't smother all of us. We have to believe that.

Respectfully I will close with this thought. Nothing is impossible. Where futility and despair reign, often some new, unexpected spark occurs, it comes to us from our higher power I call the Eternal Creator; it comes and breathes its holy life into us once again. And our fading hopes and dreams and beliefs are firmed up with a new courage and resolve and determination to carry on. To live to fight on as the warrior for another day. We must keep our eyes fixed upon the future, until our time, or, our children's time in the sun arrives.

God bless America.

Respectfully submitted,
L.J. Seavy Cioffi
L.J. Seavy-Cioffi

Enclosures (3)