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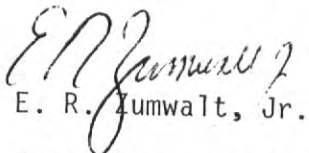
Mr. Reid Beddow
The Washington Post
Book World
Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Mr. Beddow:

Attached herewith is my proposed review of The Wages of War and
a brief biographical resume.

My social security number is

Sincerely,


E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

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Arlington, Virginia 22209
703/841-8960

Attachments

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Richard Severo and Lewis Milford concede in their Acknowledgments which come at the end of their book, The Wages of War, that while "determined to put the experience of the Vietnam veterans in the perspective it deserves, it was not our original intent to assume the burden of researching ten postwar periods and more than two hundred years of American history..."

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I was relieved when I read this admission because I had judged that the quality and scholarship within the first twenty-two chapters was of a lower order than that of the last five contained in "Part Eight: The Vietnam War and the Agent Orange Affair."

That is not to say that the first twenty-two chapters dealing with our first nine wars are not worth reading. They present a vivid, factual picture of the gross disregard of our veterans after each of those nine wars with the exception of World War II. The evidence that the authors present of the neglect of our veterans in those eight wars is impressive and depressing.

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"For most soldiers, there were no homecoming parades, no flags flying nor bands playing, no smiles from many of the civilians whose fortunes had waxed with their liberties...The veterans returned to a curious, chromatic world of indifference and even outright hostility..."

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"...the Government soon forgot that thousands came home with diseases and fevers...illnesses that would kill them if left untreated. And nobody paid much attention to the plight of veterans down on their luck..."

These quotes which sound very much as though they represent the nation's recently rediscovered conscience about our Vietnam War veterans deal, in fact, with the post-Revolutionary War and post-Mexican War treatment of U.S. veterans.

Those of us who served in World War II, who observed and participated in the benefits awarded to veterans, and who later acceded to high command during the Vietnam War were perhaps lulled into expectations that our Government would provide adequately for the men we had commanded in that war. I wish that the information provided concerning the traditional postwar treatment of veterans had been written and read by all of us twenty years earlier. Perhaps then we would have taken time from our preoccupation with the war to persuade our Government to provide as wisely for Vietnam veterans as it did after World War II.

Despite the impressive factual data concerning our earlier wars, some of the authors' conclusions seem to me to be more sweeping than the data justifies. For example, concerning the Korean War, the authors conclude that the Army, as a matter of conscious policy, decided to use the badly flawed conclusions of Dr. William Erwin Mayer, a psychopathologist, who grossly maligned our fighting men of the Korean War. The authors conclude that the Army believed that "It was clearly important that Americans continue to trust the civilian authority that got the nation into the war and the generals who had run it; they had to be told categorically that the wrongs committed by U.S. soldiers reflected badly not just on the Army and on the Government, but on the totality of American society. The Army's

weakness was everybody's weakness, the Army believed." In all of my discussions over the years with Army officers, I have never heard one who believed that U.S. soldiers in the Korean War were generally unsatisfactory nor that the Army blamed the Government or society for producing poor soldiers. Rather, there has always been a general recognition that the vast majority of soldiers in that War fought courageously.

In my judgment, in the last five chapters, the authors do a magnificent job of researching the gross mistreatment of our Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. This is an area to which I have devoted considerable study. Their conclusions concerning the insensitivity of most of those in the Veterans Administration and the Center for Disease Control who dealt with the Agent Orange issue and concerning the actual deceitfulness and falsifications of some key officials are well done.

The book was completed before Secretary of Veterans Affairs Edward Derwinski's recent breath of fresh air announcement that he will not appeal the decision by the Federal Court which requires his Department to review again the thousands of Agent Orange related cases which his predecessors had decided erroneously against our veterans.

This book should be required reading for all Government employees dealing with the Agent Orange issue and is strongly recommended to all veterans.

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