

★★★★ The Robert Maynard Hutchins
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

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3901 Klein Boulevard (J-Unit)
Lompoc, California 93436

October 12, 1987

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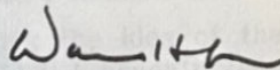
Dear Mr. Fenner:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful response to the CBS "60 Minutes" segment that focused on the class that I teach.

I am sharing your letter with Denver Mills, who is the Team Leader of the Vietnam Veterans Center, here in Santa Barbara. He would know what kind of resources are available.

I appreciate your writing to me very, very much.

Sincerely,



Walter H. Capps
Acting Director

cc: Denver Mills ✓

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Professor Walter Capps
University of California-Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California

October 5, 1987

Dear Professor Capps:

Last evening I watched a story on "60 Minutes", relating to a course entitled Vietnam 101, offered by you at UCSB.

The story touched me, causing me to get choked up. I think the reasons were both because I am a Vietnam veteran, but as much because I remember writing a paper for a college class before I went to Vietnam. The theme of the paper was- our involvement in Vietnam, and why we needed to be there. I received an 'A' for the paper. In my naive idealism, I believed that we had a responsibility to be in Vietnam, to stem the flow of Communism in Southeast Asia, and to disallow the Communists a foot-hold, from which to springboard into the balance of the Asian Continent and the world. I sincerely believed that then, but now understand that I was wrong. One of your students said that she now understood the war, and why we were there. **I was there**, thought I understood what it was about when I went there, but **still** do not understand why we were there- or what it was about! So much for naivete of youth...

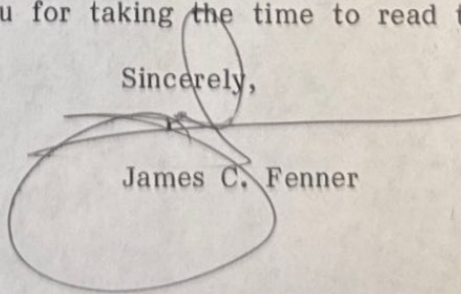
I suppose the reason for my writing though, is to ask if you know of any groups or individuals- that you may have come in contact with, that would be willing or able to assist the Vietnam veterans at the U.S. Penitentiary in Lompoc. I am incarcerated here, and shall be for some time yet. I have been in prison or county jail, for the majority of the time- since my release from the military in early 1974. I served with a Long Range Patrol/Airborne Ranger detachment in Vietnam, during 1968-1969. The doctors have diagnosed me as suffering from PTSD, but I haven't been able to get any help- especially from the federal government- for PTSD. I was hospitalized at the Veteran's Hospital in Menlo Park, but was told I was too angry to stay there, and that I should come back when I regained my composure! I went there because of my anger/rage/drug abuse, etc... Then get told I can't stay because I haven't learned to control myself!!!

So much for the soap box. I think the idea of the class is excellent, and especially the 'pilgrimage' to the 'WALL'. I haven't yet been there, and at first was incensed by the idea of Vietnam portrayed by a hole in the ground. I have seen the acceptance of the monument, and have become emotional myself just seeing the names inscribed upon it. I know (knew...) quite a number of people that are represented by those graphics in the marble- and am proud that I had the opportunity to serve with them.

If you can assist me in getting together with a program director, support group, etc- so that we might be able to get **some** program or group started here- I would appreciate your cooperation. There are a great number of Vietnam vets in the prison system, both State and Federal, and we don't have- as a general rule, any method of dealing with the problems associated with our service there. My crimes are possession of guns, and drugs. The same things that in Vietnam, were both acceptable, and sometimes essential to survival. For that, I have a seventeen year sentence, that I will have to serve nearly twelve calendar years on.

Thank you for the class- and thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,


James C. Fenner