

SS
Individual -
Viet Nam

Brownsburg, Indiana
27 July 1965

Senator Birch Bayh
Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Senator Bayh:

I have hesitated writing to you due to repercussions on other members of my family. I do not feel that I am a crackpot or that any member of my family is not a loyal American. I have served the Democratic Party on a number of occasions; I worked as judge at our precinct during the election, I was a Hendricks County Delegate to the Gubernatorial Convention in Indianapolis and without exception I have supported the Democratic Party. My daughter is presently employed in the Attorney General's Office at the Indiana State House and my brother-in-law is one of President Johnson's personal pilots. I have told you these facts only to impress on you that I am sincere in what I am about to relate to you.

I have a son, Jeffrey, who is presently serving with the 16th Infantry in Viet Nam near Bien Hoa. He was drafted and providing the administration does not come up with another policy change, Jeff should be discharged in February of 1966.

Since receiving letters from my son, I am greatly distressed with American progress in Viet Nam as well as conditions for the American soldiers. I wonder if its really true that some soldiers stand guard duty and under orders, they are not allowed to keep ammunition in their rifles or that they are to have unloaded rifles around the compound.

+ { If they are found to have loaded rifles, they are fined. Really Senator, is this a combat area, or have they renamed Viet Nam, "Fort Riley, Kansas"?

According to a UPI release in the Friday edition of the Indianapolis Times, Lt. Col. Lloyd Burke, my son's commander, was wounded by guerilla fire in a helicopter along with five enlisted men and the pilot.

I fully realize that I can't get him back in the States but knowing a little about some of the fire power that the United States has at its disposal, it certainly seems that it is about time to stop this Mickey Mousing around and use some naval and air power that will save American lives. It appears to me that the only thing we are trying to do is establish grave yards in every foreign country.

Jeff is a Sp-4, Headquarters Clerk for the 2nd Battalion in the 16th Infantry so he has been very fortunate in his short Army career. It is most distressing to my wife and I that the penalty Jeff must pay for not being married and for not attending college at this particular time was duty in Viet Nam. Incidentally, he does have two years of college credits and needless to say, he has not been involved in any criminal activity which also could have eliminated him from Army service.

I suppose I should not feel this way but in my heart I am sick, I want my son back now and in one piece. Frankly, you know that as soon as this is over in Viet Nam, it will be Thailand next, so the answer is for us to police the whole damn world. France had the right idea when they bowed out after 40,000 casualties and I'm in favor of getting out now and staying out. We lost 33,000 men in Korea and accomplished absolutely nothing. Will we have to sacrifice thousands more of our finest men in order to keep the political football bouncing?

In summary, I wish to lodge a strong protest about the operations in southeast Asia; let them have Viet Nam - we want our sons back home!

Respectfully,

DRM:pam

DIR
Personal
Confidential