

Post war honor

One week ago today the American military involvement in the Vietnam War came to an official end. Much could be said about the nature or the finality of this "ending." But it is clear that the national divisions created or nurtured by the war did not magically disappear on March 30.

There was no jubilant celebration when the peace agreement was signed and there was none last week when the U.S. officially fulfilled its part of that bargain. The war may have ended for Americans in Vietnam but it has not ended for them at home. Neither supporters nor critics of the American war effort appear ready to declare a truce in the battles they have fought on the domestic

front for the past decade.

President Nixon's television report on the end of the war last week seemed to be an unfortunate, and regrettably accurate, reflection of the national mood as the U.S. enters its latest "post war era." Although the president hailed the end of the war and the peace settlement (which he admitted was shaky at best), he continued to poke at the wounds this long war has inflicted upon the American consciousness and conscience. The President was unwilling to moderate the ill-feeling he has openly held for his critics since he entered the White House and chose to expand the war he inherited from his predecessors.

Nixon took verbal jabs at what he called "a small but vocal minority... who wanted peace at any price." The President continued to

demand that the nation not "dishonor those who served... by granting amnesty to those who deserted America."

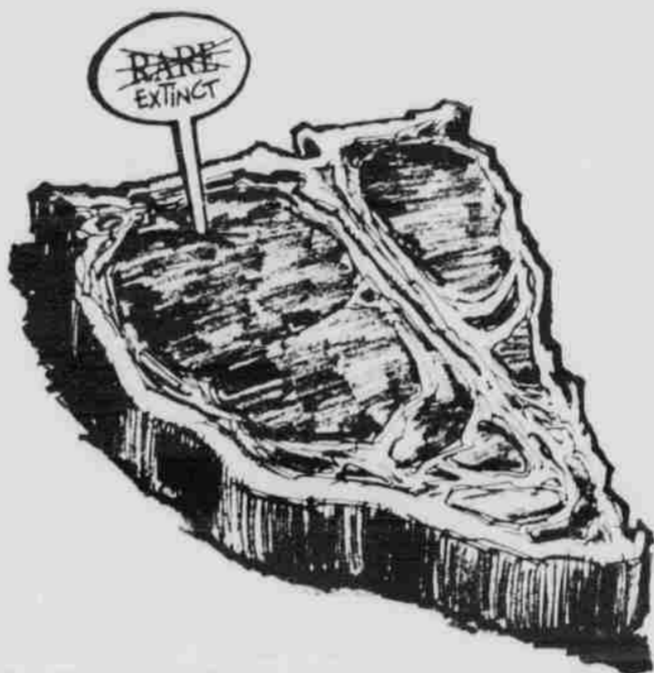
Nixon's attitude was hardly one that will contribute to the reunification of the American people. The President's television remarks set the stage for a whole week of attacks and counterattacks by the various opposing factions into which our nation has been divided by the war in Indochina. Some war critics said the ex-POWs were hypocritical liars about their experiences in enemy prisons. Then some ex-POWs and war supporters said that those war critics were the most despicable people on earth.

Funny how the "honorable" peace has done so little to help us become honorable people, isn't it?

Tom Lansworth

LET
THEM
EAT
ENTRAILS

— MRS. VIRGINIA KNAUER, THE PRESIDENT'S
ADVISOR ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS.



"You're delighted, no doubt, to see a ceiling on the beast."

Another prisoner of the war goes home

arthur
hoppe
innocent
bystander

Another American prisoner of war has been released. He is Frederick J. Friend, 24, of Elmira, Kan.

Friend, looking pallid, but otherwise in reasonably good health, walked unaided down the steps. When his feet touched free American soil for the first time in three-and-a-half years, he knelt and kissed the ground.

"God bless America," he said, his voice breaking, "and the ideals of freedom and justice for which it stands."

Waiting to greet the young hero was a crowd of several thousand cheering spectators, including the governor, the mayor and numerous other dignitaries. As flags waved and a brass band played, he shook their hands.

But the most emotional reunion was with his wife, Felicia, and their three-year-old son, Frederick Jr., whom young Friend had never seen. "It was your letters," Friend told his wife, "that kept me going."

The dramatic scene was interrupted when an official handed Friend a white telephone. "It's the President," he said.

The President's words weren't recorded. But he reportedly told Friend that America was proud of him for displaying "the loftiest idealism, the highest courage, the firmest convictions and the greatest dedication to the cause of individual liberty."

The President was also reported to have told Friend that he didn't want to "capitalize on the publicity" of the homecoming, but that when the young prisoner of war was refreshed and rested, he wanted to invite him to the White House.

"Thank you, Mr. President," said Friend, his shoulders back.

The head of the local Chamber of Commerce then read a long list of gifts a grateful nation wished to bestow on Friend "in tribute to the glorious personal sacrifice" he had made.

These included a gold lifetime pass to the hockey matches, a free trip to The Mammoth Caverns and such things as his and hers motorcycles.

In a brief speech, Friend said he didn't want to talk much about the conditions of his ordeal until all his fellow prisoners

of war had been freed. He did say he found the food adequate, if monotonous, and the main problems were boredom and the lack of exercise.

"What kept us going," he said "was the deep belief that our cause was just and the knowledge that millions of Americans were behind us."

"We had reports, of course, that many Americans didn't agree with what we'd done. And many of us thought their attitude was prolonging the war. But in a democracy, we felt it was their right to express their views as they saw fit."

This brought a cheer from the crowd. Friend, an arm about his wife, walked to a waiting car.

"Was it really all worth it dear?" she was heard to ask him.

"To tell you the truth, there were times in there," said Friend, looking back as the gates of the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary closed behind him forever, "when I wished I'd cooperated with the draft and done a two-year hitch in the Army instead."

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THE LAST POW TO LEAVE

