

'HERE IS ALBERTO' *Mother's Lament*

WASHINGTON — (AP) — All she has left to remember Alberto are six bright medals in a box and the flag that covered his coffin.

Those treasures in her arms, his mother marched with 1000 Vietnam veterans today to cast down their medals on the steps of the Capitol to protest the Indo-China war.

Then, when the time came, she couldn't let go.

And she couldn't watch as the veterans plucked ribbons and badges, from their chests, hurling them over a barricade to clatter against the statue of Chief Justice John Marshall.

Evelyn Carrasquillo of Miami didn't know of the planned gesture when she decide to join the veterans' march from a dusty camp on the Mall.

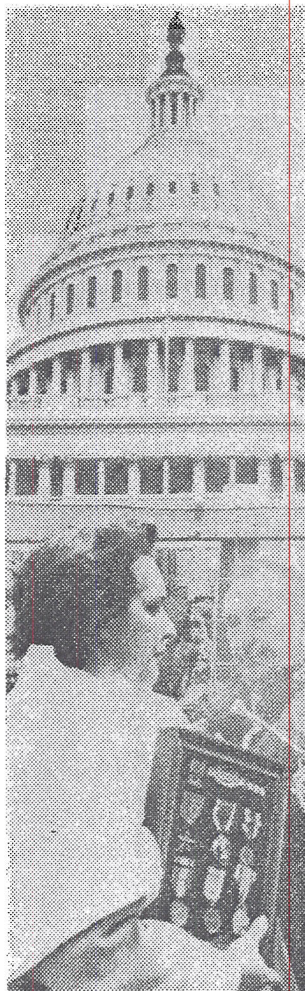
'Stop the War'

"This is what I have left of Alberto," she said, clutching the flag and the case of medals, including the Bronze Star. "Here is Alberto."

"I don't want to turn it back to them. I just wanted to talk to the people who can stop the war."

Anna Pine of Trenton, N.J., wanted to discard her dead son Fred's Air Medal and Bronze Star and Purple Heart and a half dozen other awards for heroism.

But she had already turned away crying when the first ex-soldier announced, hands trembling, "and so we cast



Evelyn Carrasquillo carries her son's medals during today's demonstration.

away these symbols of dishonor, shame and inhumanity."

"My son would be here," said Mrs. Pine. "He would throw these things away.

"But where do I throw them," she wondered, peering through tears about the crowd that had edged her away from the veterans.

The other Gold Star

parent in the demonstration, Wade Olsen of Russell, Pa., played taps on a tarnished bugle in memory of his son William.

"I didn't bring his medals," Olsen said afterward. "My wife is trying to decide whether to return them. We may.

"Bill knew this war was a fraud from the start. He wouldn't want the damn things."

Before the march, Mrs. Carrasquillo squatted on a blanket in the dust of the veterans' camp and puzzled over events that had brought her there.

She is staunchly anti-Communist and for a long time felt the war necessary — even after Alberto was drafted, even after Feb. 8, 1968, when a bullet stopped his life.

'A Cause'

"In the Spanish Civil War if a son was killed his father would stoop down and kiss his son, and pick up his son's rifle, and fight. They had a cause.

"Alberto had a cause. I don't feel it was a bad cause. But there is enough. We have lost enough blood and it is time to stop. If we must fight Communism, lets fight it here."

Slowly she looked around at the young men sprawled on the ground, most decorated, some crippled, all embittered.

"And they will give back their medals," she said. "Well, I will if I must."

But when the time came she couldn't.