



AP Wirephoto

EVELYN CARRASQUILLO AT THE CAPITOL
She carried her dead son's medals

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A Mother Who Couldn't Let Go

Washington

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 yesterday to cast down their medals on the steps of the Capitol to protest the Indochina 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 decided to join the veterans' march from a dusty camp on the Mall.

"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."

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

"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, let's fight it here."

She looked around at the young men sprawled on the ground, most of them decorated, some crippled.

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

But when the time came she couldn't do it.

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