

## Pentagon Opposes Amnesty Program For Draft Resisters

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WASHINGTON, March 1 (AP) — Amnesty for Vietnam draft resisters and deserters was opposed today by the Pentagon and the American Legion. They said it could wreck the armed forces and defame the millions who served honorably and without protest.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts said three days of hearings before his Judiciary subcommittee had not convinced him that there was a preponderance of evidence or logic to cause the nation either to reject amnesty out of hand or grant it completely.

"We must make our decision based less on our personal prejudices and beliefs than on what will be in the interests of a nation that must find some way to bind up the wounds caused by this war," Mr. Kennedy said.

"With amnesty at this time," said Maj. Gen. Leo E. Benade, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, "some military members might be influenced to desert, safe in the knowledge that punishment or continued military service would be avoided."

General Benade said there were 30,000 deserters from military service of whom 2,323 have fled to Canada and Sweden.

In addition there are thousands more who have gone abroad to avoid the draft.

John H. Geriger, national commander of the American Legion, said the Legion and its 2.7 million members supported full prosecution of all law violators. After the war ends and American prisoners are released, he said, "each case should be reviewed under existing procedures available to the courts and the President."