

NYTimes

# The B-52 Letters

COMMENT

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*These excerpts from letters to Senator J. W. Fulbright are reprinted from the Congressional Record. Names of the writers were not disclosed.*

Dear Sir: I am a B-52 gunner on temporary duty with my crew at Anderson A.F.B., Guam. After listening to all of the reports of the war being over and the troops coming home, I, as a resident of Arkansas, decided to write this letter to you, because for the aircrews and the support troops of the B-52 force it is not over and we are not coming home!

In April of 1972, my unit, consisting of two B-52 bomb squadrons was deployed to Guam. And we have been here continuously since then.

I am concerned about our increasing involvement in Cambodia and Laos. I fear that we will get into another situation like the one that led to the ten years of Vietnam. I am also concerned for myself and my fellow crewmembers should we fall into enemy hands. There is no doubt in our minds what would happen to us. I for one, sir, do not wish to die as a mercenary for a foreign dictator!

Senator Fulbright: I am a B-52 navigator currently on temporary duty at Anderson A.F.B., Guam. I am writing to you to urge you to do your utmost to end our involvement in the continuing war in Southeast Asia.

I am on my fourth tour of duty here now and have over 400 days fighting this war. I have over 120 combat missions, an air medal with five oak leaf clusters, and have been recommended for a Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism for action over North Vietnam. I am not unlike most of our servicemen still serving in Southeast Asia.

My question is: When has a man done all that anyone has a right to expect from him? I have put my life on the line numerous times over the past two years. The constant strain on my wife of both constant danger to me and our prolonged separations have her close to a nervous breakdown. Yet, although the Strategic Air Command's own doctors acknowledge the risk to my wife of yet another prolonged separation, I was recently forced to return again to Southeast Asia, and now face the prospect of serious mental problems for my wife.

Is this the thanks we get from our country and Mr. Nixon for serving our country so unselfishly for so long?

Dear Senator Fulbright: We are wrong for the continued slaughter but are afraid to admit it. Because of the amount of people who have their hands in the "profit pot" we have found ourselves unable to get out of our web.

What now? Ground crews no longer care whether or not their planes are safe and operational. Flights of crews do not wish to fly wasted missions and consequently abort when given the opportunity. If this operation is allowed to continue someone is going to lose his life needlessly.

Note—P.O.G.'s never have a nice day. Prisoners of Guam. . . . Don't let them be forgotten!

Sir: This is the first time that I have felt it necessary to write a Congressman, but I am soliciting your support to get we B-52 crew members back home.

I would think that we learned our lesson for getting involved in Vietnam. But here we go again in Cambodia, and I hear on the news that President Nixon is considering going back into Vietnam, and maybe even North Vietnam. Bombing Hanoi in December was one thing, but going back there, after our P.O.W.'s have been freed, is something else.

I feel that we B-52 crew members have done the job this past year that we came to do and deserve to return home. A few months ago we began calling ourselves the P.O.G.'s (prisoners of Guam). It started as a joke, but with each passing day, it takes on more meaning.

Dear Sir: My name is ——— and I am a co-pilot presently flying combat missions against Cambodia in the B-52 aircraft out of Utao, Thailand. Daily, we are dropping between 42,000 and 55,000 pounds of bombs per bomber on something all over Cambodia; we are programmed against twenty targets a day, each target being hit by three B-52's. All of this heavy bombing (you will note that the above facts pertain to B-52's only—TAC air strikes are numbering 150 plus a day) is going on at the specific request of the Lon Nol Government of Cambodia.