

# ditor

## The Men and the War

To the Editor:

I should like to make a partial reply to the April 7 Op-Ed article by Gloria Emerson, my experience in Vietnam being at least equal to hers and my knowledge of some of the individuals she assailed being hardly less. Loose libels, as Edmund Burke said, are to be passed by with silence and contempt. With that I agree, so long as it is an attack upon one's person. But when it is an envenomed and unsupported calumny of one's friends, that is a wholly different matter.

The late Creighton Abrams had been my personal friend since war days in Europe. Ambassadors Ellsworth Bunker and Sam Berger I came to know through personal contact in Vietnam. Others in the group hit by Miss Emerson are obviously in her view more birds of a feather.

But I speak first of Abrams. True, nothing ill was said of him, but his likeness was there conspicuously midway in the graphic gallery so arrayed as to strike the eye like a police line-up. The collective character was presented as if "from its horrid head sprang pestilence and war."

Abrams was a highly disciplined, self-contained professional. Few civilians got to know him very well, and certainly no female correspondent ever found the approach to his innerliness. I knew his character, his devotion to country, his concern for his fellow man, his passion for justice, his conviction that abuse of power was an evil beyond excuse.

Out of a few trivial episodes Miss Emerson faults Ambassador Bunker as a "man unmoved by life itself." He is somehow villainous because he liked to be with other Yale men and sing the Whiffenpoof song. Nothing said of Ambassador Bunker or implied of Sam Berger was to me in any degree recognizable. I rated them as sympathetic individuals, possessed of a large humanity, dedicated to duty amid tasks of utmost difficulty in posts where personal danger was a fact of life.

Miss Emerson wonders what these men now dream. There is no answer, so I will tell her what I dream. By extension, she would damn all of us who tried to serve our country in Vietnam. Now that the checkered flag is down and it's open season on those who tried among the losers, we need only wallow in this kind of garbage, and we'll make of the United States a land that nobody cares to serve.

S. L. A. MARSHALL  
Brigadier General (retired)  
El Paso, Tex., April 22, 1975