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The First VictimsTo the Editor: **NYTimes**

I am writing as a Vietnam veteran in response to the Sept. 15 Op-Ed article by John O'Neill. Mr. O'Neill writes of "Senator McGovern's plan to deprive the South Vietnamese people of their freedom."

What freedom? They have not had freedom since long before World War II, and it certainly was not brought to them during Mr. Nixon's term in office. Now, their military dictator, General Thieu has brazenly ended local elections.

Mr. O'Neill writes of President Nixon as "the man who brought us home from Vietnam." Is he presuming to write in the name of the 20,000 who came home dead and whom Mr. Nixon could have brought home alive? Or in the name of the thousands more who came home maimed for life? Or of the 150,000 who are still fighting this pointless war, still today adding to the number of killed, wounded and captured? Or of the prisoners of war whom Mr. Nixon could have brought home three years ago if he had ended the war as he said he would?

As to war crimes, Mr. O'Neill has learned nothing about this war if he does not understand that the first crime involving the three million veterans he speaks of was the crime of sending them to Vietnam. They were the first victims.

JOHN ROWAN
Elmhurst, N. Y., Sept. 15, 1972