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1-7-1974

### Marine Corps, January 7, 1974

Vern Riffe

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Speech  
1-7-74

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IT IS INDEED AN HONOR FOR ME TO BE HERE THIS EVENING  
TO ADDRESS SUCH FINE YOUNG MEN OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE  
CORPS LEAGUE.

THROUGHOUT ITS GLORIOUS HISTORY, THE MARINE CORPS  
HAS ESTABLISHED AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF SERVICE TO THE  
AMERICAN PEOPLE. YOU HAVE FOUGHT WITH GREAT COURAGE AND  
GREAT VALOR TO PRESERVE THE BASIC FREEDOMS THIS COUNTRY  
WAS FOUNDED UPON.

YOU HAVE BEEN WILLING TO GO ANYWHERE, PAY ANY PRICE  
TO KEEP AMERICA STRONG AND POWERFUL. YOUR SACRIFICES,  
YOUR PERSERVERENCE HAS DISTINGUISHED YOU AMONG ALL

AMERICANS, AND I AM CERTAINLY PROUD TO BE HERE TONIGHT.

TOO FREQUENTLY TODAY WE HEAR THAT PATRIOTISM IN THE UNITED STATES IS DYING, THAT LOVE FOR ONE'S COUNTRY IS OLD FASHIONED AND OUT OF DATE. I KNOW THAT SUCH THOUGHTS DISTURB YOU AS MUCH AS THEY DISTURB ME.

BUT, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE VAST, OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FEEL THAT WAY. I AM POSITIVE THAT AMERICANS ARE JUST AS WILLING TODAY TO FIGHT AND DIE FOR THEIR COUNTRY AS PAST GENERATIONS WERE. AMERICANS ARE JUST AS PROUD TODAY OF THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE AS OUR PARENTS AND THEIR PARENTS BEFORE THEM WERE.

AMERICANS ARE JUST AS PROUD TODAY OF THEIR BASIC PRINCIPLES AND THEIR DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AS GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THOMAS JEFFERSON WERE.

SUCH LOYALTY IS BASED UPON A DEEP AND OVERRIDING  
COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF OUR CITIZENS TO A FREE AND  
OPEN DEMOCRACY, A DEMOCRACY THAT ARRIVES AT DECISIONS  
BASED UPON THE REASONABLE WISHES OF THE MAJORITY  
WITHOUT ABUSING THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE MINORITY.  
A DEMOCRACY THAT IS BASED UPON RULE BY LAW AND NOT  
BY ANY ONE MAN OR PARTY. A DEMOCRACY THAT RECOGNIZES  
THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF ALL MANKIND AND SEEKS TO FOSTER  
RESPECT AMONG ALL PEOPLES.

SUCH A DEMOCRACY IS THE KIND WE HAVE HERE IN  
THE UNITED STATES. SUCH IS THE HERITAGE THAT YOU AND  
ALL OUR FIGHTING MEN HAVE GIVEN TO THIS AND FUTURE  
GENERATIONS.

THERE ARE THOSE TODAY WHO SAY THAT THIS COUNTRY IS TOO WAR CONSCIOUS --- THAT WE SPEND TOO MUCH MONEY ON DEFENSE. EACH OF US HERE TONIGHT REMEMBER THAT HISTORY HAS TAUGHT US THE NECESSITY OF REMAINING STRONG; THAT PEACE IS SECURED AND MAINTAINED NOT THROUGH WEAKNESS, BUT THROUGH STRENGTH AND PREPAREDNESS. ALL OF US KNOW THAT AMERICA HAS NEVER TAKEN UP WEAPONS TO EXPAND HER BORDERS, BUT ONLY IN THE DEFENSE OF HER CITIZENS AND THOSE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD WHO HONOR LIBERTY.

IT WAS NOT TO FORCE OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT ON ANOTHER NATION THAT WE HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL TO ARMS. RATHER, IT WAS TO ASSIST OTHER NATIONS IN PRESERVING THEIR RIGHT OF SELF DETERMINATION.

I BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL FIND FEW AMERICANS WHO

ARE PLEASED THAT OUR YOUNG MEN HAVE BEEN CALLED TO WAR  
SO OFTEN IN THE PAST HALF CENTURY. BUT I BELIEVE  
THAT YOU WILL FIND MANY WHO ARE PROUD THAT YOU AND  
THOUSANDS LIKE YOU DID NOT YIELD IN THE FACE OF THE  
ENEMY AND DID NOT SHRINK FROM YOUR DUTY. FOR THIS, WE  
OWE A GREAT DEBT TO YOU AND TO ALL THE SOLDIERS OF  
THIS GREAT LAND.

I WISH THAT I COULD STAND HERE TONIGHT AND TELL  
YOU THAT YOUR SUFFERING AND YOUR SACRIFICES HAVE  
INSURED A FREE AND SAFE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE FOR  
ALL ETERNITY. BUT I CANNOT GIVE YOU THAT ASSURANCE.  
WE MUST PROTECT DEMOCRACY EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES.  
IT IS EASILY LOST IF ONE DOES NOT GUARD IT CLOSELY.

STATE GOVERNMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND NATIONAL

GOVERNMENT --- ALL THREE THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF OUR  
DEMOCRATIC PROCESS --- MUST BE WORKING PROPERLY IF WE  
ARE TO SURVIVE AS A NATION.

ALTHOUGH THE GREATEST TEST OF DEMOCRACY IS OFTEN-  
TIMES EXPERIENCED ON THE BATTLEFIELDS, WE MUST NEVER  
FORGET THAT IT IS THE EVERY DAY WORKINGS OF GOVERNMENT  
THAT ALLOWS THIS COUNTRY TO FUNCTION.

AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF OHIO'S GOVERNMENT, I CAN FEEL  
A GREAT SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD AND CLOSENESS TO THE UNITED  
STATES MARINE CORPS BECAUSE OUR GOALS ARE THE SAME.

JUST AS YOU HAVE DEFENDED AMERICA'S LIBERTIES AND  
FREEDOMS ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF EUROPE AND ASIA, IT IS  
INCUMBENT UPON ME TO DEFEND THOSE SAME LIBERTIES AND  
FREEDOMS EVERY DAY THAT I CAST A VOTE ON AN IMPORTANT

PIECE OF LEGISLATION BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

MEASURES COME BEFORE THE HOUSE EVERY DAY THAT EITHER EXPAND OR ABRIDGE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM. THE CONSIDERATION AND THE PASSAGE OF SUCH LEGISLATION IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE YOU FELT A FREE COUNTRY GOVERNED BY DULY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE WAS THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

AS A STATE LEGISLATOR, I AM CARRYING OUT YOUR WISHES. YOU, THE SOLDIER, WHO FELT THAT MY JOB AND ALL OTHER JOBS LIKE IT WERE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LOST BY FAILURE TO ACT WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS IN DANGER.

I AM PROUD TO BE BOTH A VETERAN OF THE ARMED SERVICES AND A PARTICIPATING MEMBER IN THIS STATE'S GOVERNMENT.

I ADVISE PEOPLE EVERY DAY, YOUNGSTERS MAINLY, ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR A CAREER IN PUBLIC OFFICE.



I TELL THEM IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO BE A SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE. IT TAKES A GREAT DEAL OF DEDICATION TO YOUR FELLOW MAN. IT TAKES A GREAT LOVE OF DEMOCRACY. BUT, I TELL THEM, THAT IF THEY ARE WILLING TO MAKE SACRIFICES, THE REWARDS ARE WELL WORTH THE INCONVENIENCES.

THE SENSE OF WELL BEING AND PERSONAL SATISFACTION THAT ONE GETS FROM SERVING HIS COUNTRY IS TRULY REMARKABLE. THE MARINES FELT SUCH SATISFACTION IN WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II, THE KOREAN WAR, AND THE VIETNAM WAR. I FELT THE SAME SATISFACTION.

BUT, TODAY, INSTEAD OF BEARING ARMS TO PRESERVE OUR INSTITUTIONS AS I DID ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO, I AM WORKING IN ANOTHER WAY TO PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN OUR WAY OF LIFE.

AS A STATE LEGISLATOR, I AND MY COLLEAGUES IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE, ARE CHARGED WITH THE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY OF ENACTING LAWS THAT WE BELIEVE WILL MAKE OHIO AND AMERICA A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE. THAT IS THE WAY THAT PROBLEMS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, PROBLEMS BETWEEN NATIONS WERE MEANT TO BE RESOLVED -- PEACEFULLY, UNFORTUNATELY, ALL THE GOOD INTENTIONS IN THE WORLD ON THE PART OF AMERICA AND HER LAWMAKERS CANNOT ALWAYS STEM THE TIDE OF BATTLE.

AND WHEN OTHER NATIONS ENCRDACH UPON OUR BASIC FREEDOMS, WE WILL AGAIN GO FORTH --- TO PROTECT OUR HOMELAND FROM FOREIGN INVASION AND INTERVENTION. AS A NATION WE MUST REMAIN EVER VIGILANT, READY TO RESPOND WHEN OUR SECURITY OF THAT OF OUR ALLIES IS THREATENED.

AMERICA TODAY, MORE THAN ANY OTHER TIME IN HER HISTORY, IS INTERESTED IN PEACE AMONG ALL NATIONS. ALL OF US HERE RECOGNIZE THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN THIS DAY AND AGE OF SOPHISTICATED NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

THAT IS WHY AMERICA MUST BE WILLING NOT ONLY TO FIGHT FOR PEACE BUT TO NEGOTIATE FOR PEACE. THAT IS WHY WE MUST BE AS STRONG IN STATESMANSHIP AS WE HAVE BEEN IN MILITARY MIGHT. WE MUST BE MORE THAN WILLING TO EXHAUST ALL EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN PEACE AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE AS WELL AS ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

WE MUST NEGOTIATE NOT FROM FEAR BUT FROM COURAGE, NOT OUT OF WEAKNESS BUT OUT OF STRENGTH. WE CAN DO THIS TODAY ONLY BECAUSE MEN LIKE YOU THROUGHOUT OUR

HISTORY HAVE BEEN STEADFAST IN PRESERVING OUR INDEPENDENCE.

WE OWE A GREAT DEAL TO YOU AND TO ALL OF AMERICA'S  
FIGHTING MEN. WERE IT NOT FOR YOUR UNSELFISH DEDICATION,  
WERE IT NOT FOR THE GREAT SACRIFICES YOU HAVE MADE, WE  
COULD NOT STAND PROUD AND TALL AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE  
WORLD TODAY, AND AMERICA WOULD NOT BE THE HALLMARK OF  
LIBERTY AND JUSTICE WE KNOW IT TO BE.

WE OWE YOU A DEBT THAT CAN NEVER BE FULLY PAID.  
YOU ARE SERVING YOUR COUNTRY OUT OF A DEEP COMMITMENT  
TO A FREE AND OPEN SOCIETY. YOU HAVE MADE SACRIFICES ---  
BOTH PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL , BOTH EMOTIONAL AND  
PHYSICAL --- IN SERVICE TO YOUR COUNTRY.

BUT LET US TOGETHER PROMISE THAT YOUR SACRIFICES  
WILL NEVER HAVE BEEN IN VAIN. LET US PLEDGE THAT

WE WILL INSTILL IN FUTURE GENERATIONS THESE SAME  
QUALITIES OF HEROISM AND BRAVERY THAT YOU REPRESENT.  
LET US SAY THAT AMERICA WILL GO ON IN THE FUTURE IN  
THE SAME PROUD TRADITION THAT YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED  
AND MAINTAINED, THAT OUR GOAL SHALL ALWAYS BE PEACE  
AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH OUT COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.  
BUT THAT NEVER SHALL WE FORSAKE OUR HISTORY AND, IF  
THE NEED EVER AGAIN ARISES, WE SHALL NOT FAIL TO  
RESPOND, COURAGEOUSLY AND FORTHRIGHTLY WITH ALL OF  
THE STRENGTH THAT IS NECESSARY, AS YOU AND MILLIONS  
OF OTHER BRAVE AMERICANS HAVE DONE IN THE PAST.

I WAS CHIEF SPONSOR OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS BONUS THAT PASSED BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY EARLY IN 1973 AND WAS APPROVED BY THE VOTERS IN NOVEMBER.

I WAS PROUD TO BE PART OF THIS GESTURE OF GRATITUDE ON THE PART OF ALL OHIOANS TO OUR VIETNAM WAR VETERANS.

THROUGH MORE THAN TEN YEARS OF THE VIETNAM WAR, OUR U.S. SOLDIERS PROVED THEMSELVES TO BE AS THIS COUNTRY'S FIGHTING MEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, THE BACKBONE OF OUR COUNTRY'S DEFENSE, READY AND ABLE TO CARRY OUT THEIR ASSIGNMENTS WITH PRIDE AND PERSERVENCE, WILLING TO FORSAKE THEIR OWN WELFARE, INDEED THEIR OWN LIVES, AND FOLLOW THEIR COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP.

THE MARINE CORPS WAS ESPECIALLY OUTSTANDING IN THIS COUNTRY'S EFFORTS IN VIETNAM, AND WE OWE THEM MUCH THANKS.

THE COURSE WE FOLLOWED IN VIETNAM WAS NOT CHOSEN  
WITHOUT DISSENT, NOR WAS IT FOLLOWED WITHOUT QUESTION.  
BUT IT WAS THE CHOSEN COURSE OF THIS COUNTRY, AND  
THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR THESE BRAVE MEN WHO HAVE COME  
HOME TO US NOW.

THE PEOPLE OF OHIO HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR THANKS IN  
A POSITIVE MANNER BY OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVING THE  
BONUS.

OHIO'S SERVICEMEN CAN NOW BEGIN AGAIN TO BUILD A  
WORTHWHILE FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR LOVED ONES.