

Apology:

It has been two generations since the loss of the military draft. Two generations since the loss of two of the last vestiges of shared American experience that the draft included which made America what it is/was. Those lost vestiges are the loss of the melting pot, and the loss of working for your country.

The melting pot and the draft forced us to live and work with others who were unfamiliar to us. We overcame initial misgivings and got things done. The unknown “other” turned into the known and familiar.

Working for your country gives a sense of ownership of the country and that sense of ownership promotes a responsibility towards that which is owned. The country, and the government that runs the country, are mine. I own and am responsible for my country and want my country and government to run correctly.

Compare that to the body politic we find today, two generations after the loss of the draft. Segregated communities, and social media platforms, that never have to talk to each other, let alone live or work with each other. The government and others as “other” that should leave me alone, and even more, stay out of my community and even my country. The country is “mine” but I don’t want to be responsible for working for it, paying for it, working for society’s upkeep, or sharing it with anyone who I do not conceive of as like me.

I have an Advanced Degree in Applied Foreign Policy from the School of Marines, University of South Vietnam, 1969 (school of very hard knocks). I double majored in Death and Destruction, and Real Time Moral and Ethical Decision Making. I graduated with Honors in Lifelong Studies of Living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and P-Falciparum Malaria, the cerebral and most dangerous form of malaria.

On my first day in Vietnam I was told I was going to An Hoa which was considered “rocket city south” by Marines. My second day in Vietnam I took a chopper to An Hoa and landed as a mortar attack hit the landing zone. My year in the rice paddies and mountains of Vietnam went downhill from there. A year later the chopper that was taking me to Danang to get on a flight to leave Vietnam crashed (luckily, into a landing zone not too far south of Danang). We survived. The chopper didn’t.

I mention this short history of my work for my country, and my continued work for my country as a disabled Vietnam veteran, to cite my bona fides as someone who owns my country. As such, I offer my apology to the rest of the world for the unseemly spectacle this current president and administration has presented. This is not who the majority of us are, or how we see the world.

Forgive us. Give us time. This is the death throes of a very insecure and inexperienced “old white guys” demographic that, hopefully, will soon die out. The young multicultural, multiracial American society understands how to be civilized and inclusive.

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